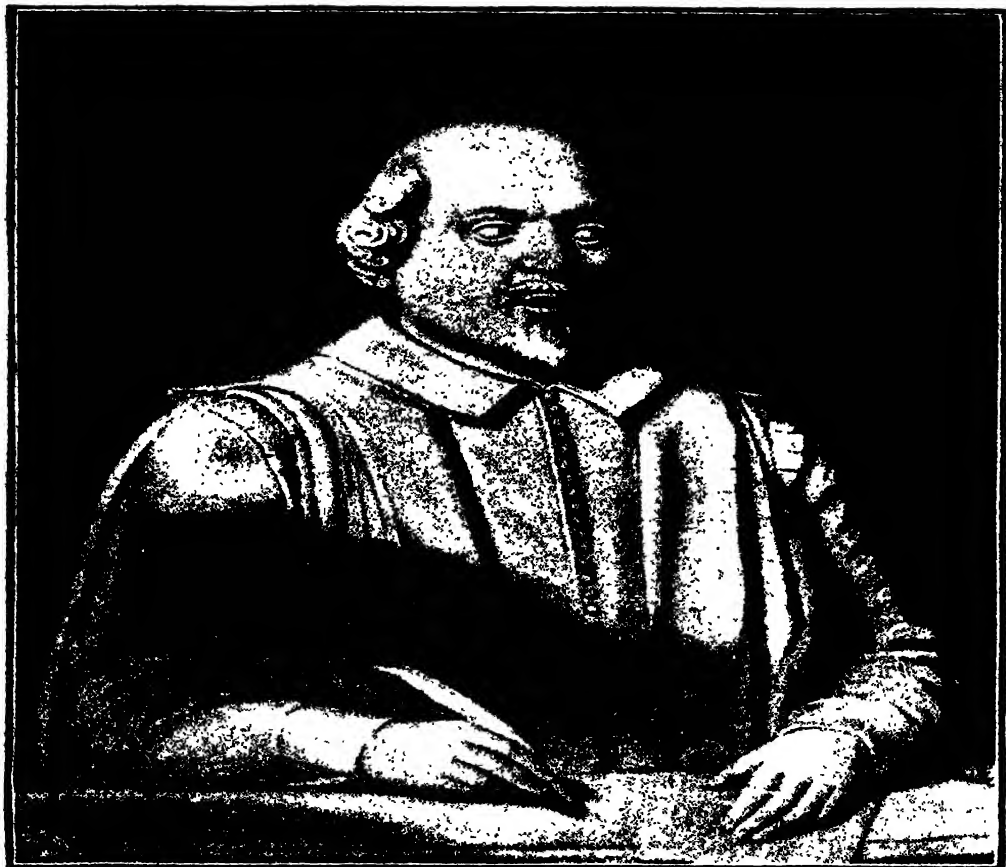


SHAKESPEARE'S TRUE LIFE.



MONUMENTAL BUST OF SHAKESPEARE.

(From the Chancel of Holy Trinity Church, Stratford-upon-Avon.)

SHAKESPEARE'S



TRUE LIFE

BY

JAMES WALTER

ILLUSTRATED

BY

J. MORA

LONDON:
LONGMANS, GREEN & CO.,
AND NEW YORK 15, EAST 16th STREET,
1890.

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WORDS OF PREFACE.

EMERSON has said that all originality is relative, and every thinker is retrospective, so also that Shakespeare "is the only biographer of Shakespeare, yet with Shakespeare for biographer instead of Aubrey and Rowe, we have really the information which is material, that which describes character and fortune, that which, if we were about to meet the man, would most import us to know."

The writer has of necessity availed himself largely of able pens, which from the day-dawn recognition of Shakespeare's unapproachable greatness have striven to show, how he absorbed into his sphere all the light anywhere radiant, every intellectual jewel, every flower of sentiment.

The crowds of writers and critics have become so merged into each other as almost to defy the power of determining to whom their varying statements belong, and, as referring to so transcendent a genius, it is immaterial to know. The results of their labours have become engrafted on the reading mind, and, in the case of a book like this designed and compiled for reference as a loving accompaniment to the great master's works, to assign to each individual the facts or conclusions which have been imported into its pages would be, except in very special instances, superfluous, the more especially where general mingling has rendered it difficult to do so with absolute accuracy.

Furthermore, Emerson reminds us that "what is best written or done has been no man's work, but came by wide, social labour, where a thousand wrought like one, sharing the same impulse."

Following up a suggestion of Cardinal Wiseman, a devoted and true Shakespearean scholar, to make diligent search among the descendants of Roman Catholic families resident at the time in "the Shakespeare country," from whom he deemed it probable information might be derived, the writer is enabled as he believes to contribute largely to the hitherto scant material. Cavillers, of whom there has ever been an abundant stock, may pronounce the new matter as mainly "traditional," forgetting how largely this quality enters into the written lives of the greatest of the human race, as it does into the history of our country itself. Should his life be extended beyond its already ripe limit, the writer hopes for strength to push investigation farther in these quarters, where his overtures have uniformly been received with extreme grace and courtesy.

One main purpose of the writer has been to purge Shakespeare's biography from the unworthy and unfounded slanders hitherto associated with it, and of which the increasing multitudes of readers in present and future generations will rejoice to get rid. Mr. Halliwell Phillips truthfully characterized Aubrey's biographies as "disfigured by palpable and ascertained blunders, evidencing that he was in the habit of compiling from imperfect notes, as also that he was one of those foolish and detestable gossips who repeat everything they hear or misinterpret"; and yet Phillips, instead of getting rid of the idle inventions, accepts and re-relates them, oblivious of Christopher North's magnificent sentence: "The animosities are mortal, but the humanities live for ever."

Preface.

While admitting the great debt of all lovers of Shakespeare to Phillips in the matter of Shakespearean research, we cannot but regret that his accumulative power should have vastly exceeded his discrimination. He tells us not to rely on statements where unsupported by corroborative evidence. In regard, however, to traditions current in villages around Stratford, he attaches great importance to such as include reference to facts or conditions which have been verified by modern inquiry, but which could only have been known to the narrators through hearsay.

The same indefatigable writer admits that Shakespeare may have been secretly married to Anne Hathaway according to Roman Catholic form, yet failed to trace the fact of a religious ceremonial union such as the writer hopes he has satisfactorily shown to have been solemnized in the Shottery Manor House Chantry.

The happy union of the descendant and living representative of the Thane of Fife with the fair daughter of Britain's Royal House standing next in succession to the throne, a family of which both parents, like our beneficent Sovereign herself, are bound up in the hearts of the nation with a respect and depth of affection to which history affords no parallel, seems a specially fitting occasion for an endeavour to place the greatest of all authors fairly before his readers, now denizens of the whole civilized world.

Shakespeare has made the English-speaking race everywhere familiar with the facts in the regal lineage of Fife and Macduff. The mighty limner is the historian. Memory recalls the defeat of Macbeth at Dunsinane in the far-back year 1054, and of the after battle at Lumphanan, in Aberdeenshire, in 1056, in which Macbeth was taken and slain, and Macduff restored to his ancient earldom, with the privileges confirmed by the grateful Malcolm of the big heart as well as of the big head.

The Macduffs continued to reign in Fifeshire till the beginning of the fifteenth century.

For three centuries they have maintained a semi-regal position, formed alliances with the Royal Houses of England, Scotland, and Wales, and held a prominent place in the national life of the country.

J. W.

St. Margaret's, Twickenham.
1890.



To

Sir Theodore Martin, M.C.B.,

Author of

“The Life of His Royal Highness the Prince Consort

(A granite foundation on which writers in future generations shall base their narrations of the
glories of the Victorian era),

and to

Helen Faucit, Lady Martin,

who, both upon the stage and by her pen,

has done so much to advance the true interpretation of Shakespeare,

this humbly attempted

Life of the World's Greatest Poet,

on truthful lines,

is, with highest respect and esteem, and by permission,

Dedicated by the Author.

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

All the Initial Letters commencing Chapters are from Original Drawings of Gargoyles on the roof of the Chancel of the Church of Holy Trinity, Stratford-on-Avon.

STRATFORD AND ITS NEIGHBOURHOOD.

Stratford and its neighbourhood. The multitude of commentators and explainers of Shakespeare's writings and meanings. Germany earlier than England in appreciating the great author. Sir Theodore Martin's translations of Schiller, Goethe, etc. Unprincipled detractors and slanderers of the poet of the world. Impudent attempt to dethrone him by substitution of Lord Bacon. The writer in company of the essayist Emerson at Stratford. Emerson's opinion of the Bacon-Donnelly fraud delusion. Shakespeare's life largely traceable in the villages and country around Stratford. Changed aspect of Stratford and its near locality since Shakespeare's day. Ruskin, the truest and most powerful critic of Shakespeare. Situation of Stratford. Its olden expiatory penal stocks, pillory, and ducking stool. Importance of Stratford in former days. Its existing centripetal attraction through one human memory. A coaching journey thither early in present century. Charles Flower's Memorial Theatre. Lord Ronald Gower's bronze group. Shakespeare's love of flowers. His strength in realizing the characters he painted.

Pages 1 to 31.

SNITTERFIELD—HIS FATHER'S BIRTHPLACE AND EARLY HOME.

Contrast of to-day's Snitterfield with the period of the Shakespeare family. Its God's Acre. Lime trees and ancient yews in its graveyard. Venerable oaks and elms. Walnut tree in John Shakespeare's orchard. Church described. John Shakespeare and Mary Arden's visits to Snitterfield. Evidence of Sadler-Sergeant Bryan as to the Shakespeare family lands in the parish. Traditions regarding John and Mary's courting time. Neighbourhood of Snitterfield especially beautiful. Spring-time season. Early worldly circumstances of Shakespeare's father. Stratford's olden municipal life. The Guildhall used as playhouse. Shakespeare's property and municipal distinctions. Warwickshire dialect and pronunciations. John Shakespeare's troubled fortunes. His removal to Clifford. His application for a coat of arms. The assertions that neither he nor his wife could write. The Shakespeare lineage. Family resemblances traceable in existing generations. Ancient carved chancel stalls in Snitterfield Church. Shakespeare's free and social nature. His indifference to literary fame. Memorials and manuscripts destroyed by fire. His wife and daughters known Puritans. As with Homer, Dante, and Milton, incidents of life scantiest and mainly traditional. Lessing, the first to realize the conception and range of Shakespeare's genius.

Pages 32 to 62

MARY ARDEN AND WILMCOTE.

Birthplace of Mary Arden, Shakespeare's mother. Her home described. A pilgrimage to her home. Mary's family lineage. Her father's will. Shakespeares and Ardens of equal social position. Scantiness of household belongings in their time. Explanation of statements regarding handwriting. State of country parishes in regard to outward profession of religion shortly after the Reformation. Charles Knight on Stratford aldermen's caligraphy. Mary Arden's first acquaintance with John Shakespeare. Religious changes and Puritanism of the time. Difficulties in eradicating the old for the new form in country churches. Local traditions of Coventry, Kenilworth, and the old chronicles dominant in their influence generally. Birmingham then little more than a village. Its mechanic people always given to country naturalists' studies. Sam Timmins of Birmingham, true example of an earnest Shakespearean.

Pages 63 to 79.

ASTON CANTLOW.

Traditions regarding Mary Arden as "a young lady of the great family of Arden." Mary's first acquaintance with John Shakespeare. Traditional stories as to his visits to her home at Aston Cantlow. Their wanderings in the adjoining Forest of Arden. Their marriage. The wedding breakfast. Dugdale's account of Aston Cantlow. It establishes the fact of the Arden home and village having undergone little change since then.

Pages 80 to 92

THE HENLEY STREET BIRTHPLACE.

Shakespeare's birth on St. George's Day, 1564. The birthplace described. Changes of structure to which subjected. Its purchase as an all-time possession for a Shakespearean museum. Its interior described. Richard Savage, the museum secretary. Museum contents

described. Antiquity and strength of the building. The Henley Street portrait of Shakespeare. His finger signet ring. Old deeds of properties and mementoes of Shakespeare.

Pages 93 to 100.

SHOTTERY AND ANNE HATHAWAY.

Anne's birthplace and home. The village old Shakespeare inn, no longer existent, described. A night at the inn. The Hathaway home described. Its immediate surroundings. Its garden a delight to Anne and Shakespeare. His constant visits to Shottery. Strollings with her in the meadows and lanes. Their mutual study of birds, trees, and flowers. Anne's gentle life and knowledge of housewifery an example. Mrs. Baker, the present occupant of the Hathaway home, a descendant of the family. The American writer, William Winter's, description of the Hathaway home and a night spent in it. William Howitt and Ward Beecher on Shottery. Shakespeare's rural descriptions largely drawn from Shottery and its neighbourhood. His biography written in its rural scenes. Shakespeare opened the pathway of rural describing to Blackmore and Richard Jefferies. Spring and spring flowers of Shottery. His frequent allusions and descriptions of these. His visits to his love at break of morn. Song of the lark, nightingale, thrush, and blackcap described by him. Spring and spring flowers, his allusions to these. Shottery lanes, their special sweetness. The briars of the lanes. The goldfinches and their thistle food. Dugdale's account of Shottery. Old Chantry at Shottery, hitherto unknown, believed to be the place in which handfast first ceremony of marriage took place. This building and its surroundings described. Pages 101 to 140

WOOTTON WAWEN.

Wootton Wawen's close identity with Shakespeare, Anne Hathaway, and Shottery. Its village a frequent resort to him and Anne. The officiating priest, Vicar Pascall, a friend of both families. The Harewell family, possessors of Shottery Manor, also owners of Wootton Wawen. The Smith-Carington family of St. Cloud, Worcester, shown by Dugdale to be the descendants of the Shakespeare time owners of Shottery and Wootton. The family monuments in Wootton Church. Their history and association with the present Smith-Carington family. Tombs of the Smiths and Harewells. Exquisite wood carving in the chancel screen and pulpit. Dugdale's reliable account of Wootton Wawen and its church.

Pages 141 to 150.

THE SHOTTERY OLD MANOR HOUSE. A REVELATION!

Of highest interest as the place availed of for the "handfast" ceremony of marriage between Shakespeare and Anne. The Chantry described as a farm residence. The owl tenants of its farm buildings. Its bell turret and formerly old times bell announcing mass. Anne and Shakespeare intimate acquaintances with the priest of the Chantry. The custom of betrothal handfast believed to be the true solution of the hitherto difficulty in Shakespeare's youthful life. The Chantry marriage, until now never explained, none the less truthful. Dominic Hunt, apparently no objector, used his office to prevent any further adhesion to Romanism. Shakespeare a zealous Protestant of large-hearted charity. His probable earnings as a youth prior to marriage. Probably associated as clerk with Walter Roche, his first schoolmaster, who had become a lawyer in Stratford. His then contributions to players' *repertoires* also a source of income. His leaving Stratford permanently for London not his first journey. Often there previously with Roche on the Lambert suits. John Shakespeare's legal struggles with the Lucys and Lamberts. His removal to Clifford. Communication and travel between London and Stratford, its difficulties. Ladies' pillion travel. Shakespeare's occupation as adaptor of plays, the likely inducing cause of his removal to London. The pure English of his writings.

Pages 151 to 171.

THE LUDDINGTON MARRIAGE.

Discovery of Richard Hathaway's will. Its conditions. Parish registers afford no evidence of Shakespeare's marriage. The betrothal at Shottery Chantry and subsequent marriage in Luddington Church. William and Anne living at her mother's house at Shottery. Handfast betrothal described. Instances of similar betrothals. Warwickshire handfast betrothals of these days. The case of Claudio and Julietta in play of "Measure for Measure." Solemnizing of betrothals in "Twelfth Night" and "Winter's Tale."

Pages 172 to 176.

A HAPPY UNION.

Ingenuity of Shakespeare's enemies in attributing to him unworthy qualities, and that his affection did not hold "the bent." Statement as to his withholding participation of London earnings from his wife. Aubrey a mere idle gossip. The Davenant scandal. Poets

like other men in their marital union. Emerson's definition of love. Shakespeare's allusions to matrimonial troubles in "Twelfth Night," and in "As You Like It," and "Midsummer Night's Dream." Charles Knight on the marriage. The journey to Worcester for the marriage license. Copy of the license. Saunders's account of Luddington. Pages 177 to 186.

CHAPEL OF THE GUILD AND JOLLIFFE'S GRAMMAR SCHOOL.

Charter of King Edward VI. Dissolution of the old, and re-incorporation of the School. Jolliffe, 1482, foundation. The plague devastates Stratford. Shakespeare enters the school. Walter Roche, the Head Master. Guild Chapel and School described. Discovery of old frescoes in the chapel. Class of education. The Lucy Puritanism a source of antagonism with Shakespeare's parents. Young Will employed in legal and literary work. The Guild master's able scholars. Course of study at the school. Progress of Shakespeare's education. Books of his probable study. His early proneness for theatricals. Literature of the period. His leaving the Grammar School. Satisfactory present state of the school. England's public schools and the question of holidays. Shakespeare as an assistant to an attorney—most probably Walter Roche. Lord Campbell on the subject. Libraries of the neighbouring clergy open to Shakespeare. His marvellous labours. Willis's (1669) description of a play he had seen at Gloucester. Similar plays performed at Stratford. Frequent visitations of players to Stratford. Transcript of entries from the Chamberlain's accounts for use of funeral pall and tolling of the big bell, its ancient curfew. Pages 187 to 230.

HOLY TRINITY GOD'S ACRE.

Its ancient Saxon name. Special charm of Holy Trinity Churchyard. Its season floral profusion. Old tombstone epitaphs. Sense of humility of families whose dead lie interred here. William Hunt and family of Hobbs' occupation of excessive portion of the graveyard. Gray's "Elegy" admirably impressed through Holy Trinity Churchyard. Shakespeare's bodyguard of rooks described. Their habits. The burial place of Shakespeare. Descendants in the churchyard. Rural deans and their duties. Pages 231 to 240.

HOLY TRINITY CHURCH.

The Church unique in character and surroundings. Its outside world of architecture. Its description. Divided governance of church and churchyard. Vicar Arbuthnot, an earnest worker. Shakespeare's sincerity and worship. The lime tree avenue. Peculiarities of the church architecture. Old baptismal font. The poet's monument. Its description. His monumental bust—competent opinions thereon. The Shakespeare graves in front of the altar, their several inscriptions. The maledictory lines on his gravestone. The old charnel house. The monumental bust his only authentic portrait. The author at Stratford with Emerson, the essayist. Attends with him a Sunday morning service at Holy Trinity. Musings during the sermon. The passing soul's bell. The pulpit hour-glass. Mary Shakespeare's social status in Stratford. The Lucys, Cloptons, and Combe families. Good old vicar Byfield. The venerable parish register, a priceless treasure. The American preacher, Ward Beecher's, experiences of a service in Holy Trinity. Its line of vicars good and mindful of their charge of the poet's grave. Gentleness and toleration a feature of Trinity pulpit. Its present vicar indifferent to any voice of praise. A pauper's funeral solemnity. The church bells. The Author's farewell to the Shrine. Pages 241 to 285.

THE LUCYS, CHARLECOTE HALL AND NEIGHBOURHOOD.

The alleged deer-stealing. Its utter improbability. The pasquinade. Falstaff and Shallow. The Lucys, zealous Puritans. Their persecutions of Mary Shakespeare and her family. Sir Thomas Lucy and his wife's tomb in Charlecote Church. Both worthy, excellent people. Beauty of the River Avon in either direction from Charlecote. Its course and junction. Charlecote Hall and Park described. The poet's mother traceable mainly through her son's training for life. Various characters depicted by Shakespeare in his plays now traceable in Warwickshire people. Every Stratford association is of gentleness. Old editions of Shakespeare, the coveted treasures of the world. Ubiquity of Shakespeare's sympathies evidence of the boundless might of his genius. Warwick and Guy's Cliffe. Kenilworth and Coventry. Shakespeare's art as shown in his day. Actors since his time. Garrick, the great exponent. The great difficulties laboured formerly under through absence of female actors. Siddons, Rachel, and Helen E. Faucit (Lady Martin) Lady Martin's gifts as an authoress. Her Shakespeare female characters. "Queen Bess" presumed to

have possessed no special charms for Shakespeare. His indisposition to honour her memory. Pages 286 to 308.

SHAKESPEARE IN LONDON.

Multitudes passing over London Bridge. St. Mary Overies Church in Southwark. Its antiquity and great interest. Its founder. Mary's Ferry. Shakespeare's brother's funeral there. King James of Scotland married here. Wide distinction between Shakespeare and other dramatists. The poet Gower's monument described. Phillips' discovery of documents concerning the early London theatres. Van den Keere's Map of London in 1593. Braun's Map of London in Shakespeare's time. Shakespeare's acquaintance with Ben Jonson. Shakespeare's deeply affectionate nature. His condition prior to leaving for London. His departure. Nature of occupation on first arrival in London. Theatres existing in London on his arrival. St. Helen's, Bishopsgate; associations with Shakespeare. The London Taverns. The Devil at Temple Bar. The Mermaid, Boar's Head, Falcon. Other taverns. The early inns of Southwark. The Tabard and other resorts of the Pilgrims described. Halliwell Phillips' serious errors as to the actors of Shakespeare's day. No mere wanderers. His errors as to Stratford Grammar School: education given there was of highest class. Alleyn's Fortune Theatre. The Curtain, Blackfriars, and other theatres. Opening of the new Globe Theatre. Shakespeare and Bacon. Performances at the Inns of Court. London Corporation action with the theatres. The theatres discountenanced. Recent discovery in Germany of drawing of interior of the Swan Theatre by De Witt in 1596. Dr. Gadertz's account of the discovery and its value. Descriptive particulars of London theatres in Shakespeare's time. The Old Tabards. Shakespeare not a professional actor. His friendship and possible joint residence with the Burbages. The actors of chief note at the time. Portraits of Shakespeare's contemporaries. Fac-similes of Shakespeare's entries from parish registers. Pages 309 to 346.

RICHMOND AND SHAKESPEARE.

Richmond of old, through centuries the home of Kings and Sovereign Queens. Queen Elizabeth's Palace of "Nonsuch," a favourite fine art study of Shakespeare. Its gardens described. Lord Beaconsfield's love of quaint gardens. A German traveller on Richmond of the last century. The parish church of St. Mary's a favourite place of worship with Shakespeare. Many of his friends interred within its precincts. Roman Catholic cordon in Shakespeare's time extended from Warwickshire to Richmond. St. Mary Magdalene sacred to Shakespeare. The family of Bardolph buried there. Queen Elizabeth's accession. Richmond greatly benefited. Spenser and Raleigh at Richmond with Shakespeare. Bacon's estate at St. Margaret's. The Emperor Frederick of Germany and Shakespeare. The poet's frequent visits at Bacon's St. Margaret's home and at Richmond and Isleworth. Two aged cedar trees, favourite shade retreat of the poet and Bacon. Bacon's marriage with Alice Barnham. His residence described. Shakespeare's religious sympathies—fancied slight by Queen Elizabeth. Queen Elizabeth and the astrologers Dee and Foreman. King James's "amicable letter." The story of the Queen dropping her glove. Shakespeare said to have neglected her memory. Astrologers' visits to the Globe Theatre. The various Royal residents in the Palace. The neighbourhood of Richmond. Pages 347 to 366

NEW PLACE, ETC.

Shakespeare's earliest purchase of property in Stratford. New Place itself. His neighbours. The Falcon Tavern. Guild Weathercock, its Latin rhymes. His return from London to his Stratford home. His blameless life in London. Condition of England in Shakespeare's time. Deaths in the family. Early influence of the printing press. Parson Gastrell's destruction of New Place. King James' frequent commands for Shakespeare's plays at Court. His retirement from the stage. The gardens and excavations of old foundations at New Place. Shakespeare's income from real estate. Death of his brother Richard. Effect of circulation of the Bible in "the vulgar tongue." Shakespeare's personality. Parson Gastrell's destruction of New Place house. Development of Shakespeare's genius and rapid progress to wealth. Uncovered remnants of New Place. His will. Ways of death as seen through his works. His death. The world's estimate during his own life. The Shakespeare family at home. Gradual increased strength of his fame. Its boundless future. His perfect sobriety. Fac-similes of Shakespeare's family entries in Stratford Register. Fac-similes of signatures and documents. Pages 367 to 395.



STRATFORD AND NEIGHBOURHOOD.



NO apology should be needed for an endeavour to provide for Shakespeare students, now included among every civilized people of the world, a truthful, loving biographical home and wayside companion, as an accompaniment to his works. Such is only obtainable

through the mirror of scenes familiar to him throughout his life, entering so largely as these did from childhood until life's close, in forming his boundless stores of nature, and endowing him with the ways and tones of thought of every sort and condition of humanity.

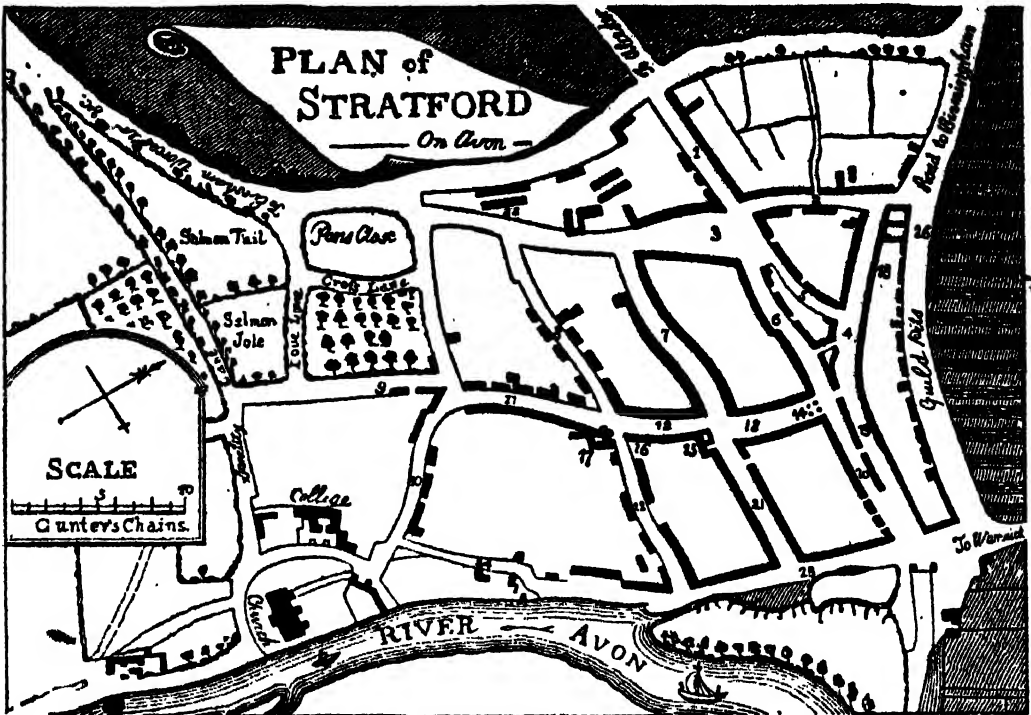
Wearied of commentators, emendators, and the whole learned tribe who have well-nigh "improved" him out of all resemblance to the original, and of whom Coleridge has so forcibly observed, "The last labourer always adds more rubbish to the heaps than his predecessors have accumulated," the compiler's aim has been to draw readers back to the simple and "unadorned," by home familiarity with the scenes whence his inspiration sprung. What would be said of improvers of our great masters, Turner, Gainsborough, Constable, or Leader? and yet such should not be one whit less endurable than the army of writers who inflict on the world their "explainings" of Shakespeare's meanings, and what he ought to have writ instead of that he did.

Germany was before England in appreciation of Shakespeare. Even now we do not approach the Germans, who have wisely and to the great advantage of their

youth, embodied a study of Shakespeare's works as an essential leading feature in their people's education. We will hope that the Head Masters of England's Public Schools will not leave to future generations to occupy ground we should have done long since. Professor Max Müller, as officially representing his nation, in an address to the Stratford Tercentenary Celebration in 1864, candidly stated the mighty influence of England and the world's greatest writer.

our literature. We think of the man with his large, warm heart, with his sympathy for all that is genuine, unselfish, beautiful, and good, with his contempt for all that is petty, mean, vulgar, and false. May the youth of England ever continue to be nursed, to be fed, to be reprov'd and judged by his spirit."

Would that these expressed hopes, so far as the youth of England is concerned, were closer of realization; but the flood of

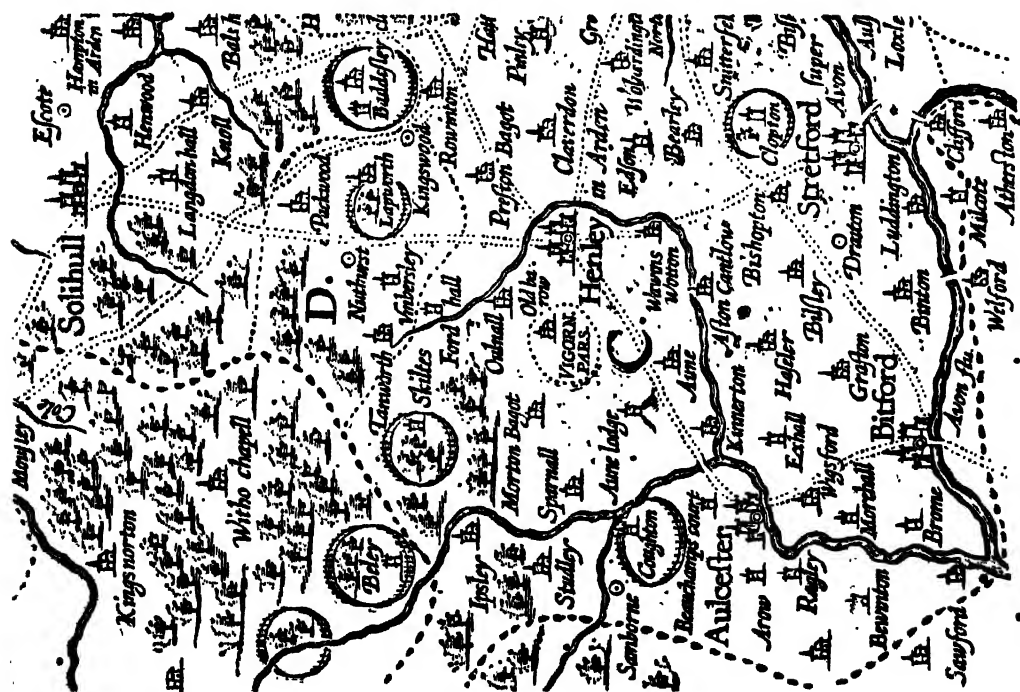
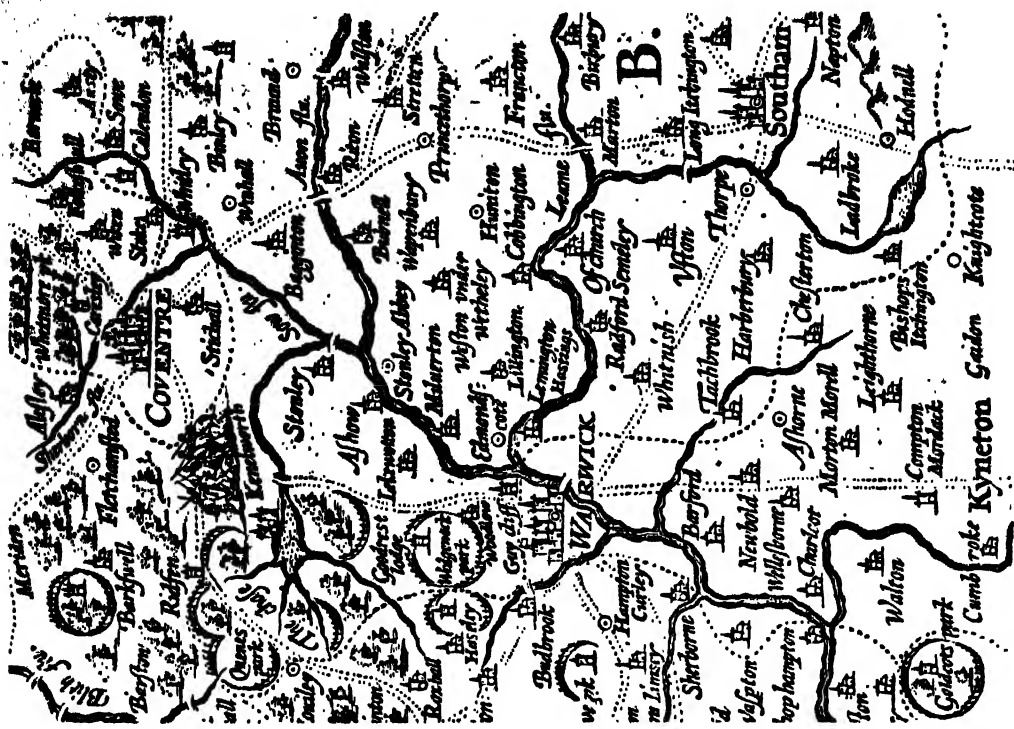


AS IN SHAKESPEARE'S TIME.

The Address set out how that "Great nations make great poets, great poets make great nations. Happy the youth of England whose first ideas of this world in which they are to live are taken from his pages. That silent influence of Shakespearean poetry on millions of young hearts in England, Germany, and all the world, shows the almost superhuman power of human genius. There are many students in Germany who have learnt English solely in order to read Shakespeare in the original, and yet we possess a translation of Shakespeare with which few translators of any work can vie in any language. What we in Germany owe to Shakespeare must be read in the history of

more than questionable literature on which our youth of both sexes revel, indefinitely postpones any general familiarity with our own great master's works. Looking, however, on what has been accomplished by Sir Theodore Martin, our gifted English translator of the German Schiller and Goethe, whose elegant and powerful renderings, known and appreciated in all lands, in directing English students to his loved authors, we will, with such an example, hopefully await the future. Meantime, let the Schools and Universities look to it. Shakespeare knowledge must be a test in all examinations.

There exists generally a conviction that it is





MODERN MAP OF COUNTRY AROUND STRATFORD.

high time to get rid of the absurd stories hitherto passed along the line by the biographers of the greatest of mankind, "the master of the human heart," attributing to him habits of life utterly inconsistent with the accomplishment of labours greater, as of order, towering majestically over those of any other human being. These fables find no place in this volume, save for repudiation or

exposure, as falsehoods disgraceful to their originators, and unworthy of the writers who have continued their repetition for acceptance as facts in that one short existence, which gave to the world more about real men and women, politics and society, than is to be found in all the rest of literature. Colossal as was his genius, raising him, far above all other men that ever lived, he is

nearer to us all, even the most insignificant, than any other of our fellow-creatures, living or dead. True, he was from early dawn of his mighty intellect titled "the gentle," for while he instructs, he does not lecture; though he reproves, he never jibes. When he discourses of human foibles, he seems to be almost speaking of himself, and to be drawing his illustrations from what he knew of his own infirmities. When he extols virtue or genius, he is praising others. The saying of Orlando in *As you Like It*, "I will chide no breather in the world but myself, against whom I know most faults," is the epitome of Shakespeare's attitude towards us all.

Such foul language recalls Norfolk's advice to Buckingham when planning destruction to Cardinal Wolsey in *Henry VIII.*, Act 1, scene 1:—

"Be advised;
Heat not a furnace for your foes so hot,
That you do singe yourself."

It is scarcely conceivable that any writers would have the daring to insult the whole Christian world, by the application of such epithets to him of whom it has been well and truly said, that in storing his mind, he first went to the word and then to the works of God. In shaping the truths derived from these sources, he obeyed the instruction planted

Towards this generous, noble and pure nature, hitherto biographers have shown a meanness as astonishing as it has been long-continued.

In this our age, when doubt of anything has lost novelty, even the existence of him in whom the literary expression of English thought had as yet found its culmination, is impudently drawn within the province of scepticism, and a daring endeavour is made to instal a contemporary unprincipled lawyer on the pinnacle of him acknowledged by the universal world, as the one of all others whose name can never die, his experience being co-extensive with every field of human knowledge. Proportionate with the audacity of these pretended sceptics, have been their growing efforts to blacken the character of our immortal poet, as a means to advance their fantastic creed, that Shakespeare's plays were the work of Lord Bacon. One of the most zealous has informed the world that "Shakespeare was a fornicator, an adulterer, a usurer, an oppressor of the poor, a liar, a forger of pedigrees, in order to obtain a coat of arms to which he had no right, a poacher, a drunkard, an undutiful son, and a neglectful father."

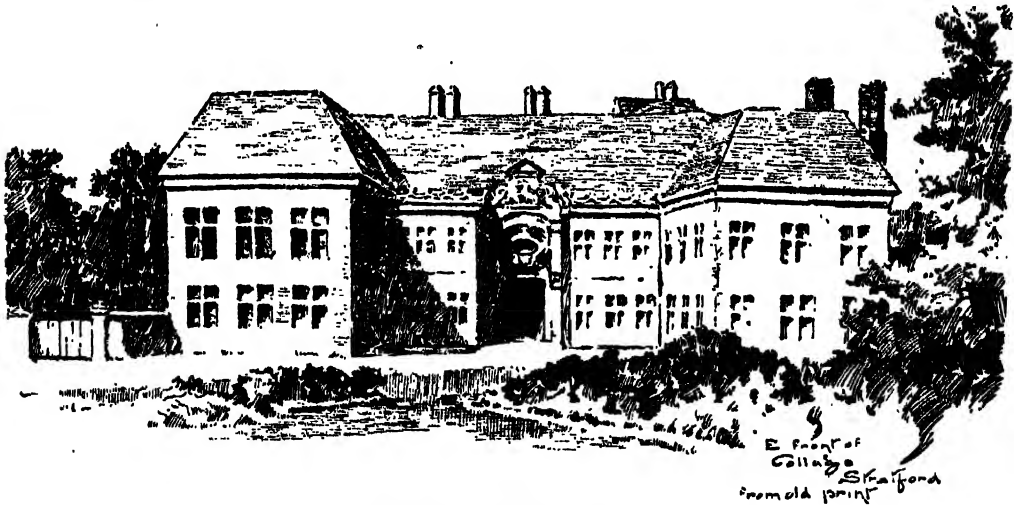


Clifton
Bridge

by Him who had formed him *Shakespeare*. Hence his power of inspiring us with sublime affection for all that is properly good, and of chilling us with horror by his fearful delineations of evil. He perpetually reminds us of the holy volume; not by direct quotation, indirect allusion, borrowed idioms, or palpable imitation of phrase and style, but by an elevation of thought and simplicity of diction not to be found elsewhere. A passage rises in our thoughts unaccompanied by a clear recollection of its origin. The first

impression is that it must belong *either* to the *Bible* or to Shakespeare. No other author excites the same feeling. In Shakespeare's plays religion is a vital and active principle, sustaining the good, tormenting the wicked, and influencing the hearts and lives of all. What uninspired writer ever made us feel the value of prayer as a privilege so affectingly as he has done in *three words*. It flashes across the brain of Othello the Moor, that possibly his friend may be practising upon him; a conditional curse, therefore, bursts from his lips: "If thou

If Shakespeare was a mere stool pigeon, one would suppose that the true author of the "Tempest" or "Macbeth" would be sought for among the men who wrote great dramas! But they who deny Shakespeare, carefully avoid giving the credit to Ben Jonson, to Beaumont, Marlowe, or to Fletcher. They select as the true author a man whose dramatic literature was confined, so far as his own claims ever went, to certain worthless masks and verses which only certain scholars know anything about. Because



WHERE CLOPTON LIVED.

dost slander her and torture me, *never* pray more."

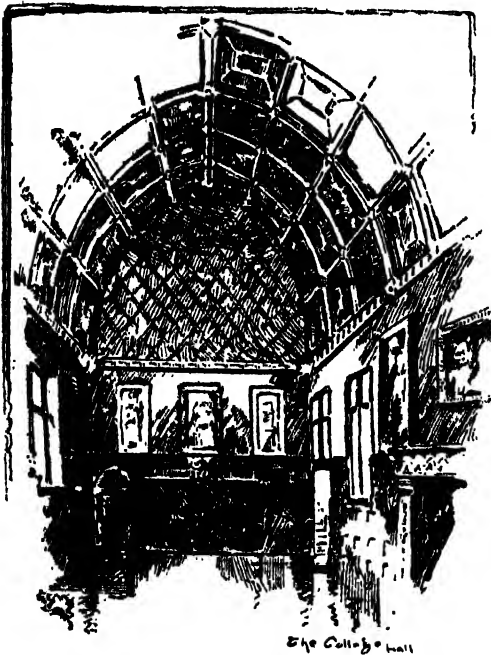
The delight that some men take in trying to upset history and tradition is but the envy of miserably small and discontented minds yearning for notoriety rather than desire for true knowledge. Of such is the wretched attempt to dethrone Shakespeare. A little knot of the smallest minds have of late years denied his existence, or rather, have put forward Bacon as the real Shakespeare. Because he is alleged to have held a menial office outside the theatre, to have married, as is falsely and maliciously stated, an illiterate woman, therefore, we are to infer that he did not write plays or poetry. But in this case of Shakespeare, we have the immortal works themselves; who wrote them? There were great dramatists in Shakespeare's day and generation, men of whose lives and work no question is raised. None of these were doubters, or dared to place the unprincipled lawyer on the throne of the immortal drama-

Francis Bacon was one of the most omniscient of men, they presume him to have written the plays attributed to Shakespeare. No true student of Shakespeare promulgates such nonsense. Shakespeare originated every thought in his works. Scarcely a play in the whole collection but has its familiar antecedents. "Hamlet" and "The Merchant of Venice" were dramas before Shakespeare appropriated them. Where a play which prompted him has not been discovered, a story or a legend has, and it is only after centuries of exploration by thousands of scholars that these outlines have been discovered. The current literature of that day, which has vanished for ever, such as it was, may have left no other impress on the world of thought than the phrases which Bacon jotted in his commonplace book, and Shakespeare's marvellous brain rehabilitated in some immortal sentence.

This eminent lawyer and philosopher, Bacon, who is pretended to have produced

such pure and exalted ideas, is handed down to us in history as of a very base character. Having reached the Bench, he was eventually convicted of selling his judicial decisions. He confessed his guilt, and suffered penalty and degradation. Would it not be nearer truth to say that it is an impossibility that such a man could have written what are called Bacon's "Works," and that Shakespeare was the real author of the philosophy in question. There is far more reason in this theory. If Bacon was the author of the dramas, why did he permit one of the number to be published under Shakespeare's name? Why should he ascribe that one which appealed most strongly to British sympathies to a then obscure play-actor? Was he ashamed to be known as a dramatist, or was it due to kindness? If so, it were an un-

and there is strong proof to be advanced that Shakespeare was contemporary with Francis Bacon, and was a brilliant wit. This class, as we know, has its serious turns, and just as the humorist Sterne and the witty Sidney Smith both wrote sermons, so Shakespeare must have had his hours of study such as produced the Bacon theories and sayings. It is highly probable that Shakespeare was too timid and reserved to offer his work in his own name, especially seeing he was a popular writer of plays, and hence he assumed that of a friendly lawyer, preferring to appear by attorney. How improbable, then, that this lawyer, who falsely bears the palm, could have produced such pure and exalted ideas, seeing his base and degraded character. Let any one examine, in the British Museum or elsewhere, the title-page of any of the original issues as first made in his day and times. Compare the following title-page, and compare its testimony with the claims of the Baconian idiots:—



"The Tragedie of King Richard the third, containing his treacherous plots against his brother Clarence and the pittifull murder of the innocent nephews, his tyrannical Vsurpation with the whole account of his detested life and his deserved death, as it hath been lately acted by the King's majesties' servants, newly augmented

by WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

London: printed by Thomas Creade, and are to be sold by Mathew Lowe, in St. Paul's churchyard, 1612."

Now, at the above date, when good Thomas Creade in honest truth announced to the world that he was printer of Richard III.'s treacherous plots, and that his friend, Matthew Lowe, over against St. Paul's Cathedral, was publisher thereof, Shakespeare was living in Stratford, where he died three years afterwards. Bacon at that time was living in London, and at little more than boy age was not only Attorney-General, but also member of the Privy Council. He had full power to punish any literary theft, and yet he allows Thomas Creade to publish one of his most splendid productions, as the work of a mere adventurer who had gone back to his country home, whence he never returned. Had Shakespeare conferred any important favour on Bacon, there might have been some shadow for the wonderful generosity, but no such idea is suggested. We are obliged therefore rightly to conclude either that the

heard-of generosity. Men have often been convicted of stealing the productions of others, but where has ever been the man so liberal as to write a thrilling and tremendous tragedy, and then present the chaplet of fame to a mere attaché of the theatre? It is within the bounds of reason to inquire whether Shakespeare be not really the author of Bacon's Essays, and, indeed, all that scheme which the world is pleased to call Baconian,



RESIDENCE OF SHAKESPEARE'S SON-IN-LAW, DR. HALL.

dramas were written by our Immortal of Stratford, or else that Bacon disowned them, generously exalting the latter to the highest literary rank in the temple of fame. Shakespeare's works were published in a collateral edition in 1623, three years before the death of Bacon, and yet he continued to make no objection. At this time Bacon was in disgrace, and needed all possible assistance. Why did he throw away these dramas, which would have done so much to redeem his reputation?

It fell to the lot of the compiler of this volume to accompany Ralph Waldo Emerson on a visit to the shrine at Stratford. The great essayist was then, together with his daughter, on a visit to the late Edward Fordham Flower at his seat near Stratford. Fordham Flower had in early life emigrated to America, and there greatly distinguished him-

self as an eloquent advocate of slave emancipation at a time when such aid as he rendered involved much personal risk. After an energetic career in the New World, he returned to England, and, settling in Stratford, founded the family now so prominent there. His eldest son, Charles Flower, of Avon Bank, has steadily devoted time and unsparingly his means to the advancement of every object in connection with Shakespeare calculated to beautify his native town; this with an entire freedom from any

ostentation. It was on a Sabbath morning we attended together the service in Holy Trinity Church. During a walk in God's Acre,—the subject being the Shakespeare-Bacon delusion and the tendency of the New World mind towards novelties,—Emerson, with archly shrewd sarcasm, remarked: "We are young, and youth likes to break new ground, hence some few Americans entertain the idea that Bacon was the author of the works ascribed to Shakespeare, and that the philosopher wrote the plays as recreation from his greater mental occupations. You may, however, feel assured that our people one and all heartily wish that Bacon had *recreated more* even at the risk of *philosophising less*." It would be difficult to produce a more pithy solution of the attempted dethronement than that so well dealt, by "Punch:—"

Says Mither Donelly,
Who writes so funnily,
"Sure, Bacon's side I am on ;"
"The side of Bacon,"
Says Punch, "you've taken
Against our Will is gammon."

Seemingly we are denied all but what have hitherto been regarded as trivial details of a life which bequeathed to the world the mightiest intellectual achievements. We cannot look upon him through the ordinary biographer or correspondence, or any of the channels through which other lives are illustrated. The world asks "What do we know of Shakspeare?" Is there not force in the words of Socrates applied to something scarcely less wonderful and mysterious, "All that we know

papers of a similar description in London and elsewhere, form the principal source of knowledge, and it is remarkable how much we have been able to learn through these cold, formal, but most truthful and impartial witnesses.

Let us go, then, into the streets of Stratford-on-Avon, into the highways and byways dear to him, and in the meadows, fields, and villages of his home, and trace the outlines of his own description, see the objects which must constantly have been before his eyes, and whose impress is reflected most vividly throughout his works. We shall there learn that he never lost touch of, or was divorced from, external Nature. For him, Nature and Man were not distinct, but one ; it was by the infinite variations of Nature



THE TOWN AND DOWER RESIDENCE OF THE CLOPTONS. (BACK VIEW.)

is, nothing can be known"? And, yet, possibly, we know quite enough, if, to what is properly meant by knowledge, we add the far rarer and more valuable quality of understanding. We know when and where our Protean figure was born, where he went to school, where, after attaining manhood, he chiefly lived and worked, for the most part what poems and plays he wrote, whom he married, how many and what children he had, where he passed the closing years of his short life, where he died, and where he was buried. As for the rest of his history, it may be like Viola's love in *Twelfth Night*, "A blank, my Lord," and yet it is a blank we can fill up very largely if we have but the skill and the penetration to do so. The public records at Stratford-on-Avon and

he illustrated the infinite humours of man. To these localities genius has imparted an interest that does not attach to any other on the globe. It was here that in the spring months, when the trees were pushing forth their buds and blossoms, in the seventh year of the reign of "Goode Queen Bess," was born the immortal Shakespeare. Here we still see the holy temple in which he was baptised, within whose sacred walls around the font stood friends praying for the babe's welfare, in full assurance of that faith which grasps eternity for one just born into time ; and where he was at last buried, the same silvery Avon where he fished and sailed and swam, the schoolhouse in which he was taught "Small Latine and less Greeke," the same pathways through woods and flowery meads that led the greatest of all poets

to the cottage of his love, "Sweet Anne," and the same old mansion of the Lucy's intact as in the days of "the myriad-minded." Familiarity with these haunts of his childhood and youth will recall the power and truthfulness of his writings, and teach that he was endowed with a telescopic and microscopic vision. The one power he directed towards the furthest thoughts, the other he turned to the common things around him. And, wherever we are it matters not, in Warwickshire or elsewhere, we can all contribute something which shall confirm the accuracy of his observation. Go out into the open fields, into the air, into the woodlands, look around you, and it will be well if you can enjoy their scenery as he enjoyed them. Flowers and singing birds, and green grass and rivers, Nature has given unto us with no unsparing hand everywhere. And this, after all, is the great moral that Shakespeare teaches us, that if we use them but rightly we shall—

"Find tongues in trees, books in the running
brooks,
Sermons in stones, and good in everything."

We have endeavoured to present to the reader a mass of original and faithful illustrations of scenes and objects familiarly known to him; to catch, while yet there is time, representations of what remains of his day—many of the old houses hallowed of associations, and quaintly picturesque cottages, now fast disappearing through time's decay—and to place these before the reader, as a loving accompaniment to the study of the great author's writings. The writer aspires to nothing higher. He whose philosophy is deeper than Plato; whose tenderness, Christian charity, and eloquence for the poor, as golden as those of Chrysostom; the "myriad-minded," because in him everybody finds himself reflected; he who is like a steam-hammer, that can flatten tons of iron at a blow, and yet descend so gently as to crack a nut; he whose wit is so constituted that it can deal with, suggest, or answer the most ponderous of human questions, and yet can the next moment jest or pun upon the slightest subject—is known and understood best when, free from man's miserable criticisms



Drawing room
mantel piece
Halls Croft

and carpings, he is companioned with at home in the dear Stratford-on-Avon he loved so well. How true is it that a man's book is the best interpreter of himself, and the best biography will come naturally, as it were, to those of Shakespeare who have most knowledge and thorough appreciation of his works. It is unquestionably matter for sorrow that reliable facts concerning him were not noted



STAIRCASE. OLD HOUSE IN SHEEP STREET.

down while there was time. For in truth we may often gather more of a man's mind from so-called little things, from notes or passages in books, from letters to intimate friends, from literary memoranda, than from cold, formal, lifeless biographies. The former let us into the inner way to the *penetralia* of his affections, to the holy of holies of his mind and heart. For most great men seem to have been reserved. True greatness does not seek to have its every deed blazoned abroad. Greatness leaves greetings in the marketplace to fools of fashion, and in the case of Shakespeare, we forcibly inquire whether it cares to be remembered or not. Is it not *too great* to care to be remembered? May not this, then, be the true explanation why Shakespeare has left so few traces of his individual life and character behind? It will be found how circumstances, insignificant in themselves, acquire value

in connection with the history and progress of Shakespeare's mind. Oh! for the vainest of a vain world, who in the hope of perpetuating their own little names, have collected a few trifles concerning the immortal man. The age had not learnt the marketable value of such gossip, or we should have had plenty of it. Woe to Shakespeare, had he lived among us, if, when living, we had appreciated him! Every action, every word, would have been related. So, perhaps, it should be matter of rejoicing that we have few records or memorials outside his imperishable works. Still, there seems ever to have been a universal craving to know something about him. What can we do? His house can whisper nothing; there are no lingering echoes of his laughter closeted in the corners of its rooms. And yet men come to that house as if it could tell them something! They think some secret is contained within those walls—they centre the whole of their curiosity upon that little tenement, forgetful of Stratford and the country round. Whatever in the future may be discovered concerning Shakespeare, that house holds it not. The secret, if there be any, lies out in the open fields and woods around Stratford. The reeds of the Avon, more vigorous of growth than elsewhere, are more likely to whisper his life to us, for the stream flows through the midst of the land where he lived more often than within those walls to which such multitudes of eager travellers flock.

The features of the landscape have not greatly changed, the hills are the same he climbed, the course of the Avon is the same. Shakespeare would recognise the country, but he would not know his native town, much less the parental home in which he drew his first breath, for in his time it stood out in the fields; now it is in a street blocked and bricked round with houses. As to the home of his creation, it has been ordered of Providence to exist only in imagination. Descendants, however, of the flowers that he plucked grow in the fields; the offspring of the birds that he loved to hear, still chant to us in the woods, but the home of his retired life has faded from sight. There is no need to wander in the dreamland of fancy and conjecture; the flowers and the birds are real, and the country is real, and Shakespeare's writings are real, and whatever connexion we may find between them, all partake of their reality. Milton did not speak without deep meaning

when he sang of Shakespeare's "wood notes wild." It had a reference to other things than his supposed non-classical education. Stratford, Shotton and their surroundings tell truthfully and lovingly the study of Shakespeare's life, and what manner of man he was is writ large enough in his own plays. He was a man the most impressionable and the most self-controlled that ever walked the earth. He was "of blood and judgment so commingled" that the proportion between impulse and self-restraint, between passion and reflection, between meditation and action, was equal and perfect.

It has been well said by one of his own noble county, that every nation has its holy place—some spot made sacred by its associations with some great or pious soul, who has blessed the world by his life and labours. Even sober England boasts of, at least, one place, one Loretto shrine, to which thousands on thousands not only of the children of her

exclusive possession; few or none had dreamt of visiting it, and his fame was rising above all rivalry, if not yet established on its present pinnacle of supremacy, when the Pilgrim Fathers established a colony, from which plays, playwrights and play-actors were banished. Just below the diffidence, about a quarter of a century before England put forth the first rivulet from the river of her being and history, to fill the fountain of a new national existence in the Western world, Shakespeare was at his culmination as a poet. Americans meet him first, when they trace back their history to its origin. He, the greatest of the old masters, stands in the very doorway of their "Old Home," to welcome them with the radiant smile of his genius. The first of all goals for children of the New World visiting England is Stratford-upon-Avon, where he was born and cradled; even Westminster Abbey, with all its associations, stands second in their estimation



Shakespeare's House in 1801
from an old Print

own fair land, but of every country in Europe, and from the shores of the New World, her sons have built up and from which her children have wended their way, if not with "sandalled shoon and scallop shell," yet, in the spirit of love, of reverence and gratitude, they have journeyed to testify how perennial is the feeling which inspired the palmers and pilgrims of old; and for ever, under every variety of worship, form, and fashion, men will pay homage where it is due. Our great dramatist is quite as much the heritage and boast of the English beyond the Atlantic and Pacific, who, in varying forms, have reproduced the strength and habits of the "old country" into their adopted lands, as of the English still resting in their puny sea-girt isle at home. When Shakespeare wrote, the forefathers of the present generation of Americans were still living in their ancient homes, many of them ignorant, save by vague rumours, of the character and extent of the newly-discovered continent, of which Spain claimed

to the birth and burial place of the one man. They were Americans, and Milton was an Englishman before he began to write. As Englishmen we may almost be said to hold our right and title in him by courtesy; but in "Glorious Will," the American, by full and direct inheritance, are equal co-heirs of all the wealth of his memory. Already America has become numerically the largest constituency of his fame. He has more readers on the new continent than on all the continents and islands of the world; and from decade to decade, and from century to century this preponderance will probably increase by the ratio of more rapid progression. Republicanism is held in check through admiration of the race of kings, princes, knights and heroes created by him. More than half the homage the existing regal courts get from the spontaneous sentiment of the public heart, arises from the dignity with which he has hallowed the royal brows of his monarchs. Few of these knew how to talk, and walk, and act with the majesty



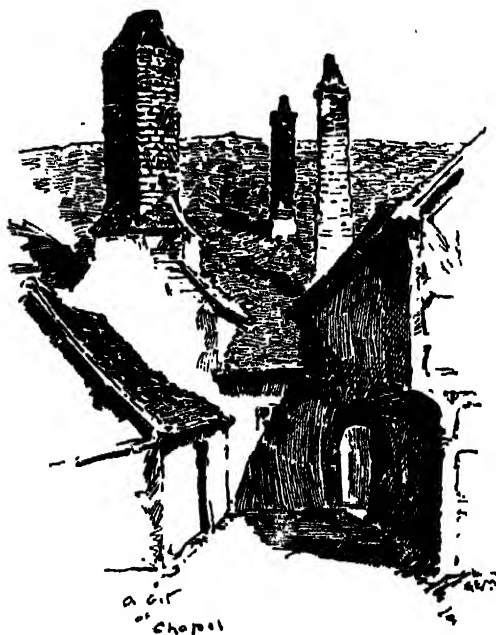
that befitted a king, until he taught them. The Great Terra Australia, New Zealand, with the multitude of isles now belting Britain into Oceana, had not dawned into existence. Of all our common inheritance of great traditions and glorious memories, nothing is now so familiar or so dear to our peoples, holding sway in the globe's widest distances, as Shakespeare's name; no monument of English antiquity so sacred in their eyes as his birthplace and his grave; and neither England nor Germany has furnished more eager inquirers into his meaning, and analysts of his genius, than dwellers in our own Colonial Kingdom and the great nation forming the United States. The people of America, in common with other regions of the wide world peopled of England's race, proud claimants of Shakespeare's heritage, realise thoroughly the words of Ruskin as to Shakespeare's plays:—

"They are perfect because there is no care about centuries in them, but a life which all men recognise for the human life of all time; and this is not because Shakespeare sought to give universal truth, but because, painting honestly and completely from the men about him, he painted that human nature which is constant enough: a rogue in the fifteenth century being, at heart, what a rogue is in the nineteenth, and was in the twelfth, and an honest or a knightly man being, in like manner, very similar to other such at any other time. And the work of this great idealist is, therefore, always universal; not because it is not portrait, but because it is complete portrait down to the heart, which is the same in all ages; and the work of the mean idealists is not universal, not because it is portrait, but because

it is half portrait, of the outside, the manners and the dress, not of the heart."

Reader, believing as we do, that all the volumes yet written on Shakespeare do not furnish as much true, and therefore sound, criticism as these few words of Ruskin, we ask you to wander with us in the fields of his native Warwickshire, and linger about the spots hallowed as his familiar haunts and home, and there find the best guide to, and interpreter of, his mighty writings.

Lord Bacon once remarked, that "large obstacles may be seen through narrow crevices," so we may obtain through small openings a view over large sections and important influences in the poet's life. Charles Knight, eminently the best biographer of Shakespeare, admits that "every life of him must to a certain extent be conjectural." The German writer, Karl Elze, in his most valuable recent addition to the store, reminds us that, a hundred years ago, the biographer of Shakespeare was much in the same predicament as the young theologian, who found that Frederick the Great, when about to select a preacher, had caused a blank sheet of paper to be placed in the pulpit as the text from which he was to preach his sermon. He adds, "Shakespeare's life is, indeed, anything but a blank leaf, but the writing has for the most part become illegible, and all the philosophical and critical tests that have been





The
old lock
Stratford

applied have not, as yet, succeeded in accomplishing much more than in bringing to view a number of—for the most part—unimportant, nay, thrilling facts and scattered fragments, and these can be formed into one structure only by means of various combinations and conjectures." Amid this scantiness regarding his physical life, his intellectual being, as existing in his works, increases from age to age, vastly gaining inward strength and outward vigour, and exercises its influence in every one of the different countries of the civilized world; a fact that cannot be maintained of any other poet the world has ever seen. To no other human being that has ever existed can his own words in *Cymbeline* (i., 6 [7]) and in

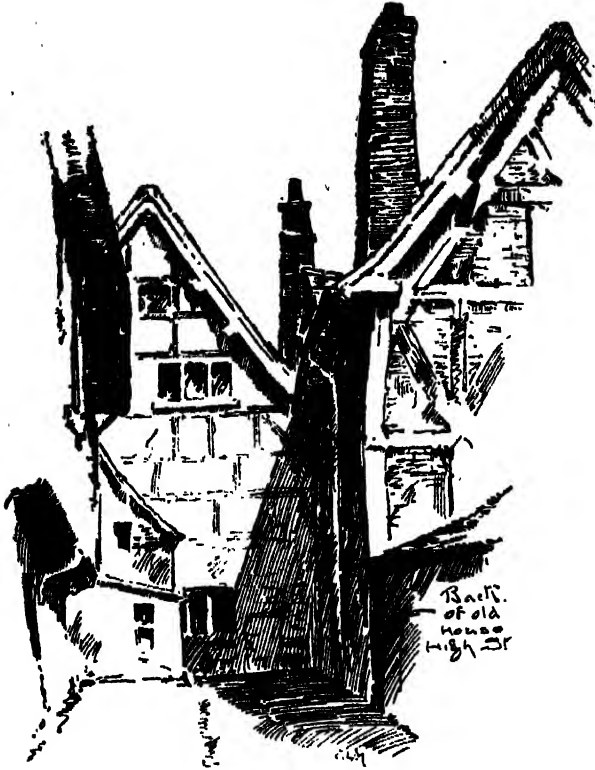
"*Henry VIII.*" (v. 5.) with absolute truth and justice be applied.

"Half of men's hearts are
his
He sits 'mongst men like a
descended god;
He hath a kind of honour
sets him off,
More than a mortal seeming,—

Wherever the bright sun of
heaven shall shine
His honour and the greatness
of his name
Shall be, and make new
nations; he shall
flourish,
And, like a mountain cedar,
reach his branches
To all the plains about
him; our children's
children
Shall see this, and bless
heaven."

What district, even in historic England, can vie with the county of Warwickshire in delightful associations of the past? Within its borders is the quaint old town of Coventry, where in the olden time the Lady Godiva took, in costume of Nature, an airing on horseback; Warwick, with its castle, where the King Maker and the Giant Killer lived—the castle of Cæsarstower, erected before the Norman

conqueror appeared in the land; Beauchamp Chapel, where sleeps the red-faced lover of Queen Elizabeth and the Regent of France, Richard Beauchamp; the remains of the regal palace of Kenilworth, with its ivy running rejoicingly and, under seeming protection, destructively over its decayed magnificence—the old work of De Montfort; John of Gaunt and the Gipsy Earl; the grand monastic remains of Evesham; Stoneleigh, the princely seat of the Leighs, where Charles I. was entertained when the Coventry men shut their gates on his rueful and elongated countenance, and which was in "the long ago" a Cistercian abbey, and granted to Charles Brandon, the lover and husband of the beautiful Princess Mary;



Guy's Cliff, where Guy of Warwick turned hermit, and where Mrs. Siddons was wont to go to breathe the fresh air after a London season; the noble Elizabethan mansion of Charlecote; the tiny sequestered hamlet of Shottery, clothed with associations of love's passion, such as will live to the end of time; and this very Stratford, which but for the one eventful circumstance of its uneventful history, had else been unknown and unvisited.

The quiet, restful, native town of Shakespeare, now a household word wherever the English language has penetrated, is situated on a gentle rising ground on the right bank of the Avon, in the south-west corner of Warwickshire, at a point where it is a fairly broad, bright stream, sweeping silently along on its way to the Severn, through level meadows, where the grass grows green and deep. The higher ground on either side rolls gently down, descending sometimes to the margin of the stream, but elsewhere parted from it by broad stretches of level valley. It is eight miles from the county town of Warwick, and about a hundred miles from London. Stratford being a scattered town,

it is enabled to afford space for numerous orchards and large gardens to many of its dwellings, and lofty trees thrive and yield umbrageous shades on its pathways. Its venerable Collegiate Church, so sacred to the heart of the whole literary world, was described in Henry VIII.'s time as lying half-a-mile from the town. Its eastern window is reflected in the peaceful river which flows beneath, its grey tower being embowered amid lofty elm trees. The great road from the Metropolis passing through Oxford to Stratford, and leading from thence to Shrewsbury, enters the town from the east, crossing the Avon by a noble bridge of fourteen arches, with a causeway whose wearisome but needful length tells of inundations in the low pastures that lie all around it. From this bridge also a beautiful view is obtained of Holy Trinity Church embosomed amid its trees, and forming a more than picturesque termination of the river reach. Where the bridge now stands there was in ancient times a ford; and from a combination of this word with the Saxon "Straete" or "Stret," signifying a street or road, the name of the town is derived. As in the Great Bard's day, so it is now, a quiet place free from all excitement and disturbance.

Stratford is described by Camden as an "emporium non in elegans," and is a place of Saxon origin, existent over a thousand years ago, and originating from a monastery founded shortly after the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons. According to Camden, the place was made over to Ethelard, a Governor of Worcestershire, to the Bishopric of Worcester three hundred years before the Nor-





of Stratford in Shakespeare's time. An ancient road, formerly the route to Ireland, crossed the Avon here on a paved way through the stream, generally fordable, and gave it the name from Straete ford, as did Stoneyford acquire its title from its proximity to the Stour. It was at such ford localities that travellers could make their halts and rest, so also at such points they were obliged, when the streams were excessively high and rapid, to bivouac, until the waters had subsided. How welcome would hospitality be in such places of inevitable

detention! Hence the first thought of founding a monastery, from which bountiful charity should extend so as to afford the often much-needed assistance, and the hospitable reception so welcome and necessary to the many wayfarers who in flood times would otherwise find themselves reduced to privations on either of Avon's banks. The mind and eye will recur to those past days and associate the existent site of the Red Horse in Bridge Street with the scenes of river fording in ages prior to the existence of any bridge, although there doubtless was a bridge at this point, prior to the noble structure created by Stratford's citizen Knight Clopton. None can expatiate more learnedly on these interesting antiquarian features of the most typically English of the English shires, and how it alone has held its own free from the special conditions which gave a peculiar character to those of the shires which lay along the Scottish and the Welsh marshes, or those along the coast which were

man Conquest. The Earl of Warwick seems to have become lord of the manor

exposed to continental influences, than the cultured William Gardner Colbourne, host of

the Red Horse, who, having been educated for the profession of an architect, is at home in all that attaches to the history and surroundings of his native town. Mine host, who has passed the civic chair and now rests in aldermanic honours, if caught in the humour, will expatiate how amongst the English shires Warwick has rightly held the foremost rank, and has been connected with all the great movements in English history; that the tongue which its people spoke is that which became the literary language of England; and when roused to boastful enthusiasm our scholarly friend Colbourne will tell you that the shire which produced Shakespeare rightly holds a commanding position in the history of the civilized world.

Within measurable years, and almost under shadow of the Holy Shrine, formerly stood the parish stocks. This Public Expiatory



was placed in the roadway near the Church, so that folks could see offenders as they wended their way to the House of Prayer. Many a naughty varlet had the great limner seen expiating his offences therein, even to a whole night:—

"He hath set in the stocks all night."

—*All's Well*, Act iv., scene 3.

Weighty though the delinquent may have been,

"The stocks carry him!" —*Ibid.*

Or did the remembrance of deer-killing suggest, in the "Merry Wives of Windsor" (Act iv., scene 5)—

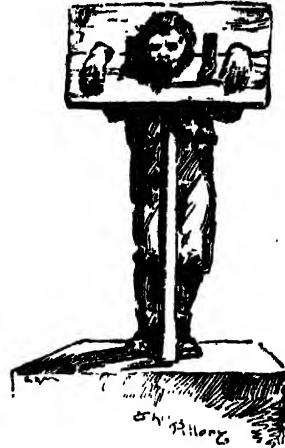
"The knave constable had like to have set me in the stocks."

—*Merry Wives*, Act iv., scene 5.

"Let's be no stoicks, nor no stocks, I pray!"

—*Taming of the Shrew*, Act i., scene 1.

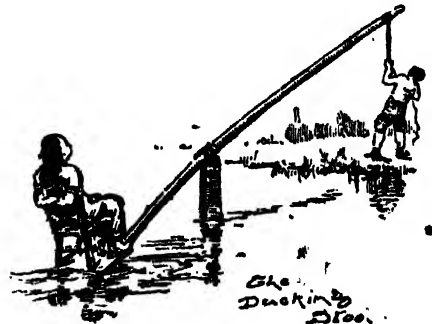
Mention of the fact that the penal instrument held due prominence in Stratford is needed, or it may be assumed that the folks of Master



Shallow's day were of more orderly and regular conduct than their neighbours. This was clearly not the fact, for in "Richard II." (Act v., scene 5):—

"Like silly beggars, who, sitting in the stocks, rejoice in their shame."

One must confess almost to a feeling of regret at the absence of the penitential "refuge" from the spot under shadow of God's temple, and we are not ashamed to admit that we seldom see a pair of stocks without wishing to put someone in them; as it is, we regret that the interesting and venerable relics of a past penal code became a dead letter, and fell into perfect disuse. So much for modern prison discipline, tread-mills, silent systems, and solitary confinements, and so forth; these have done away with ducking-stools, the wholesome stocks, the pillory and other venerable instruments, honoured monuments at once of the wisdom





Red Horse

and wickedness of our ancestors. Occasionally, when one comes across these round little holes, and which even, at this date of record, may be found in out-of-the-way villages, they seem to invite a pair of legs to occupy them, looking as they do so disconsolate at having nothing to do; one is almost tempted, like Lord Camden, to take a seat, if but for a few minutes, to keep them in practice. Near at hand, too, was the Beggar's Bush, the ancient whitethorn on the roadside, a shelter of the mendicant pilgrim from the trying noon-day sun. They whose minds delight to hark back to olden times, can picture to themselves the groups of sufferers—afflicted mortals waiting under the shelter of the whitethorn for the passing of the holy dignitary, the Superior of the Abbey, to secure a hoped-for blessing and probable alms. However some may rail against what they are pleased to term superstition, it is at least a picturesque quality of our ancestors of the ancient faith—the humble-minded poor of them especially had a devout and lowly deference to those whom they believed God's ministering servants, which it would be no harm if we participated in a little more than we do in our generation. One of the extremes to which our boasted enlightenment tends is irreverence. Probably this quality has been imported from the New World across the Atlantic, where, from the youth of both sexes, it has long since been banished altogether. The present age is far too prone to run to the opposite of

what we call superstition, and divest both the clerical character and the sacred temple of those proper associations and prestige, which distinguish one from the ordinary man and the other from the ordinary building.

The old ducking stool process was carried out by the river side, in the lane adjoining the site of Charles Flower, Avon Bank Garden.

Let no man cross Clopton Bridge here at the foot of Bridge Street, venerable as it is, though showing few evidences of the progress of time, without pausing to contemplate the distant church in which the poet lies buried, exquisitely disclosed to view at this point, and exult in the malediction which has kept his ashes undisturbed in its quiet and hallowed vaults. What honour could his name have derived from being mingled in dusty companionship with the epitaphs and escutcheons and venal eulogiums of a titled multitude? What would a crowded corner in Westminster Abbey have been compared with this reverend pile, which seems to stand in

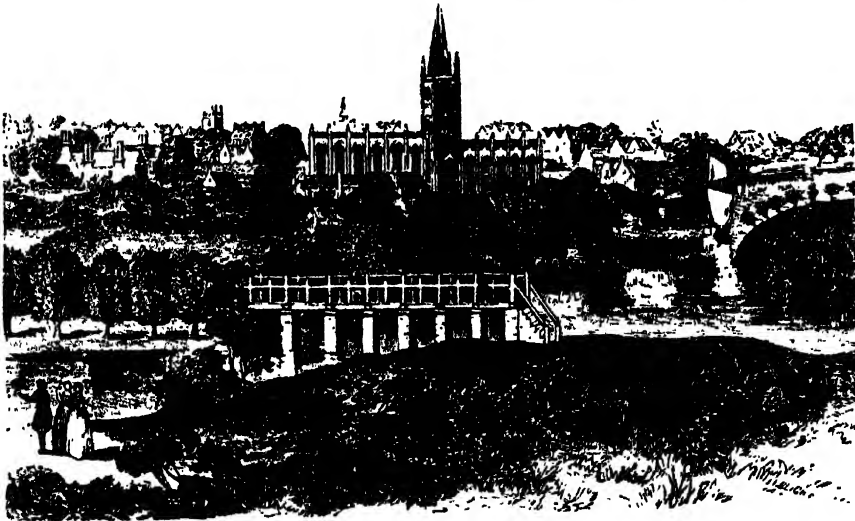


Kitchen of the Talbot.

beautiful loneliness as his sole mausoleum? The solicitude about the grave may be but the offspring of an over-wrought sensibility; but human nature is made up of foibles and prejudices; and its best and tenderest affections are mingled with these factitious feelings. He who has sought renown about the world, and has reaped a full harvest of worldly favour, will find, after all, that there is no love, no admiration, no applause, so sweet to the soul as that which springs up in his native place. It is there that he seeks to be gathered in peace and honour among his kindred and his early friends. And when the weary heart and failing head begin to warn him that the

of these lovely villages will vie with the Great Shrine itself in attractiveness to the yearly increasing volume of pilgrims. Hitherto, Colonial and American tourists outnumber our own visitors, but this will all change with the progress of education and the greater familiarity of our people with his "works, greater and greater for all time."

Judging through one's own feelings, Stratford is best seen by solitary pilgrims, or small groups of kindred spirits. There are few old towns which have undergone so little change in the period of lapsed time to which the mind delights to be called back.



VIEW OF STRATFORD, SHOWING HOLY TRINITY WITH ITS FORMER WOODEN SPIRE.
(FROM AN OLD PRINT.)

evening of life is drawing on, he turns as fondly as does the infant to the mother's arms, to sink to sleep in the bosom of the scene of his childhood.

There is no district of Britain so fruitful of pleasure to the cultured mind as the Shakespeare country. Apart from its deep interest as the loved home of the world's greatest writer, the richness of the country—and especially its studding of magnificent timber trees—yields attractions exceeded in no other county. Englishmen unversed in Stratford surroundings should feel that no intimacy with continental Europe can atone to themselves for the shortcoming. Shottery, Snitterfield, Wilmcote, Aston Cantlow, Wootton Wawens, will yield a full harvest of thought, and to future generations each

We may almost say that, saving the home in which he passed his last years, after retirement from London stage-life, all the old landmarks are there. The church, the school, the inns, the old homestead of John Shakespeare—the birthplace of Mary Arden, his mother—the garden and relics of New Place; the hall of the Lucys', and the cottage of Anne Hathaway, his wife, carry the visitor back over more than three centuries; in a word, it is the place in which Shakespeare first saw the light, where he breathed in those earliest impressions of nature and of life which form and colour the rest; the place to which he retired in his maturity to brood over those treasures of observation and reflection which he had amassed in his intercourse with the world



and with his own soul, and is laden with associations on which the noise and bustle of the world jar. Here Shakespeare lived before he entered the great world. From this quiet shelter he looked out on it with the eagerness of youth. Hither he made his escape from the stage, turning afterwards to the spot which in childhood had been his cradle, as the fitting refuge and shelter of his meditative age. It has been said by some observers that the very faces of the people recall his image. This may be to consider too curiously, but the thing is by no means impossible. In out-of-the-way nooks and corners of England, where the population is stationary, from which there is some emigration, but into which there is no immigration, and in which a limited number of families inarry and intermarry, a sort of local type of face and figure establishes itself. From some such causes as these the Shakespeare head and bearing are recognizable, physiognomists contend, with more than ordinary frequency, and with a good deal more than accidental resemblance, in the streets and country roads and lanes of Stratford and its neighbourhood.

Stratford was a place of importance as early as the eighth century; and, according to Leland, a monastery was founded, shortly after the conversion of the Saxons to Christianity, on the site now occupied by Trinity Church. Till the lapse of a considerable period from the Conquest, the town subsisted as an appanage of the diocese of Worcester, and owed much of its prosperity to the favour extended to it by successive bishops.

These ecclesiastical dignitaries seemed to have possessed a park at Stratford; for, in 1288, Gifford, Bishop of Worcester, complained of certain parties who had broken into this enclosure, and stolen his deer, and directed letters of excommunication to be issued against the delinquents. It would thus appear that deer-stealing was a failing of the people of Stratford at an era long anterior to the time of Shakespeare. It by no means follows, however, that Shakespeare was in his time as delinquent in this or any of the loose habits of conduct, and passed down through uninquied tradition in connection with his name, and as needlessly accepted and adopted by his biographers generally. To have acquired his vast stores of knowledge during the few years between birth and the early period at which his productions were gradually unfolded to the world, is utterly and entirely inconsistent with any but entire devotion to study and the observation of Nature in every and its minutest forms, and therefore at variance with any of the idle fables. At an early period the town seems to have been invested with the privileges of a borough, and we find that Richard Cœur-de-Lion gave permission in 1197 to hold a weekly market; but a regular charter of incorporation was first granted by Edward VI. "to the bailiff and burgesses of Stratford-on-Avon," and this afterwards was amplified and extended by two subsequent Charters from James I. and Charles II.

The most prominent historical incident connected with the town of Stratford is an



ROAD APPROACHES TO STRATFORD

interruption to its peace and its occupation in 1642-1643, during the great Civil War, a generation after Shakespeare's time, by a party of Royalists, who were expelled by the Parliamentary forces under Lord Brooke, of Warwick; but the latter were in their turn ejected shortly afterwards, and thereupon Queen Henrietta Maria, at the head of an army nearly five thousand strong, entered the town in triumph. She was joined by Prince Rupert with reinforcements, and took

woodland district, and hard by the river Avon is the village of Aston Cantlow. Another road indicated on this old map is that to Warwick. The wooded hills of Welcomb overhang it, and a little aside, some mile or a-half from Stratford, is the meadow of Ingham which John Shakespeare rented in 1571. Very beautiful is this part of the neighbourhood, with its rapid undulations, little dells which shut in the scattered sheep, and sudden hills opening upon a wide landscape.



her abode at the mansion of New Place, probably as being the best in the town; and there for three weeks, during the summer of 1643, she held her court. Quitting Stratford, she proceeded thereafter to the plain of Kington, near Edgchill, where she met the King, and proceeded with him from thence to Oxford. This little episode in its history is almost the only event which connects the town with political and military annals.

Dugdale's Map of Barichway Hundred, in which Stratford is situated, published in 1656, shows four roads issuing from the town. The one to Henley-in-Arden, which lies through the street in which Shakespeare passed his boyhood, continues over a valley of some breadth and extent, unenclosed fields undoubtedly in the sixteenth century, with the hamlets of Shottery and Bishopton amidst them. The road leads into the then woody district of Arden. At a short distance from it is the hamlet of Wilmcote, where his mother, Mary Arden, dwelt; and some two miles aside, more in the heart of the

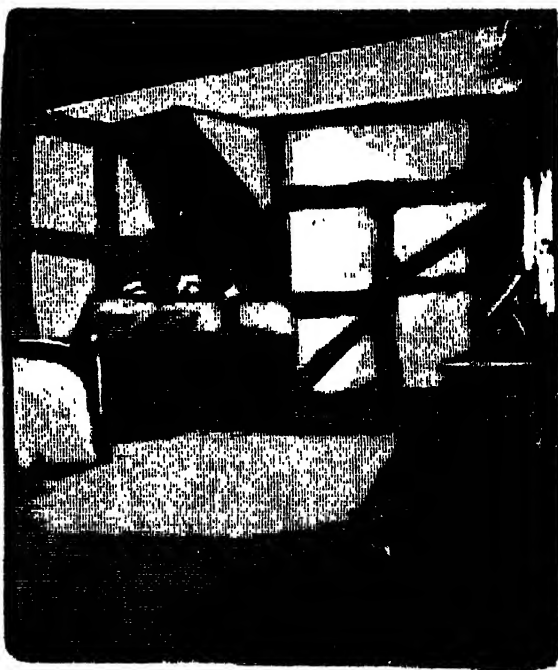
Ancient crab-trees and hawthorns tell of uncultivated downs which have rung to the call of the falconer or the horn of the huntsman. Having crossed the ridge, rich corn lands are entered, with farmhouses of no modern date scattered about; and deep in the hollow, so as to be hidden till we are upon it, the old village of Snitterfield, with its ancient church and its yew-tree as ancient. Here the poet's maternal grandmother had her jointure; and here his father also had possessions. On the opposite side of Stratford the third road runs in the direction of the Avon to the village of Bidford, with a nearer pathway along the river-bank. Crossing the ancient bridge by the fourth road (which also diverges to Shipston), and we are on our way to the celebrated house and estate of Charlecote, the ancient seat of the Lucys. A pleasant ramble indeed is this to Charlecote and Hampton Lucy, even with glimpses of the Avon from a turnpike-road. The road runs through meadows without hedgerows with pathways following the

river's bank, now diverging when the mill is close upon the stream, now crossing a leafy elevation, and then suddenly dropping under a precipitous wooded rock. The walk is such as a poet might covet, and one Shakespeare would and did enjoy in his boy-rambles.

A delightful walk of about two miles can be had upwards from the Church towards the Memorial Theatre along Avonside—first on the Stratford side to the stone bridge, and then on the side opposite, through quiet low-lying meadows bordered by fields. Up to the bridge the stream is navigable, and the occasional sail may be seen gleaming white amid the green trees as it glides past the resting-place of the poet. But on the upper side there are reaches through which even a light shallop would have difficulty in forcing its way. The bullrush attains in the soft oozy soil that forms the side and bottom of the river to a height from eight to ten feet, and in the flatter inflections, where the current stagnates, it almost chokes up the channel from side to side. Here, it is seen in tall hedge-like fringes that line and overtop the banks; there, in island-like patches in the middle of the stream; yonder, in diffused transverse thickets, that seem to connect the fringes on the one side with the fringes on the other. For the first mile or so the trees which line the banks are chiefly old willow pollards, with stiff rough stems and huge bunchy heads. Shrubs, chiefly the bramble and woody nightshade, have struck root at top into their decayed trunks, as if these formed so many tall flowerpots, and display in autumn the glitter of glossy black and crimson berries from amid the silvery leaves. The scenery improves as the stream is ascended. The willow pollards give place to forest trees, carelessly grouped, that preserve untopped and un mutilated their proper proportions. But the main features of the landscape remain what they were. A placid stream, broadly befringed with sedges, winds in tortuous reaches through side meadows; and now it sparkles in open sunlight, for the trees recede; and anon it steals away, scarce seen, amid the gloom of bosky thickets.

Such is the Avon!—Shakespeare's own river. Here must he have wandered in his boyhood, times unnumbered. That stream,

with its sedges and its quick glancing firs—those dewy banks, with their cowslips and daffodils—trees, chance-grouped in his day, and to which these have succeeded—must all have stamped their deep impress on his mind, and when an adventurer in London, they must have risen before him in all their sunshiny peacefulness, to inspire feelings of sadness and regret; and when in after days he had found his true vocation, their loved forms and colours all became mingled with the tissue of his poetry. And here must he



have walked in sober middle life, when fame and fortune had both been achieved, happily to feel amid the solitude that there is but little of solid good in either, and that even were it otherwise, the stream of life glides away to its silent bourne, from their gay light and their kindly shelter, to return no more for ever. What would his thoughts have been, if, after spending in these quiet recesses his fiftieth birthday, he could have foreseen that the brief threescore and ten annual revolutions—few as certainly as evil—which have so long summed up the term of man's earthly existence, were to be mulcted, in his case, of full seventeen years!

A good general view of Stratford is that from the opposite side of the river, at a point known as Cross-on-the-Hill. The venerable church, with its clear, sharp spire,

which is a little retired from the town, discloses at this spot under different aspects the sacred resting-place of him whose memory shall be "fresh to all ages." It has ever been a favourite spot with artists from which to make a general sketch of the town, though by no means that from which the church is seen to greatest advantage. The scenery, though lacking boldness, is most picturesque. The traveler sees around him, if in spring time, the greenest of all green low-lying meadows, rising on both sides into gentle knolls and rich pasture lands, with the Avon passing through the broad valley be-

resisting the charms of such associations. Doubtless he often sought out this very spot, now hallowed indeed, and viewed from it with loving eyes the village of his birth and the beautiful scenery that surrounds it. The whole region may be said to smile with wild flowers. The writer was assured by Washington Irving that it was on this spot he wrote in pencil on the back of a letter these words: "How would it have cheered the spirit of the youthful bard, when, wandering forth upon a doubtful world, he cast back a heavy look upon his paternal home, could he have foreseen that before many years, he should return to it



neath; and he may here in their several seasons observe, and if he will, in loving remembrance, pluck, all the flowers of Nature's Great Poet—the daffodil, the dim violet, the pale primrose and bold oxlip; and may listen to the nightingale and lark, and his other song birds, pouring forth their melodies with vehemence, heraldic of the presence of him who recorded as man never before or ever since has done. There is tradition that it was here Shakespeare made appointments with sweet Anne to escort her homewards to Shottery, and that he held the spot as specially selected by the skylark, which, together with the blackbird and thrush, he represented to Anne—as being continuous in song later here than in other neighbouring localities. These associations rendered the spot romantic in the poet's mind as a frequent trysting place for evening joyous return walks with his love. The recollection is pleasant, whatever foundation may exist for its truth. Certainly no one will be gainer through

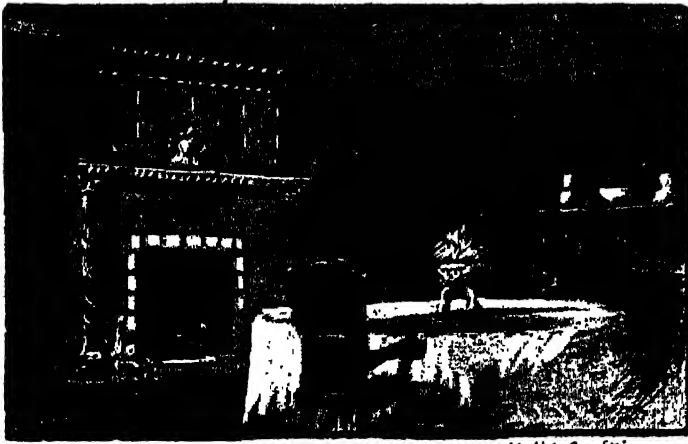
covered with renown: that his ashes should be religiously guarded as the most precious treasure; and that its lessening spire, on which his eyes were fixed in tearful contemplation, should one day become the beacon, towering amidst the gentle landscape, to guide the literary pilgrim of every nation to his tomb." Aye, indeed, what place in Christendom can vie with Stratford-upon-Avon for the centripetal attraction of one human memory? London is the birth and burial-place of many distinguished poets, philosophers, statesmen and heroes. Their lives make for it a nebulous lustre. The orbits of their brilliant careers overlap upon each other, so that their individual paths of light, intersecting in their common illumination, like pallid sunbeams, do not make any vivid or distinctive lines over the face or over the history of the great city. But the memory of Shakespeare covers with its disc the whole life and being and history, ancient and modern, of Stratford-upon-Avon. There

is nothing seen before or behind it but William Shakespeare. In no quarter of the globe since he was laid to his last sleep by the sunny side of the peaceful river, has the name of the town been mentioned without suggesting and meaning him. Many a populous city is proud of the smallest segment of a great man's glory. "He was born here." It is a great thing to feel and say, and it is uttered with exultation when showing this heirloom of honour to strangers as the richest inheritance of the town. But being born in a particular place is more a matter of accident than of personal option. No one chooses his own birth-place, and the sheer fact that he there made his *entrée* into the

wide between those he made in these favourite walks in his youth and the foot-prints of his ripe age as a permanent resident.

We would urge all lovers of Shakespeare to visit Stratford from the Warwick approach, availing themselves of the old turnpike road, eschewing the railway. It is a delightful walk or drive. The charming undulations of the land, and the sylvan character of the whole journey, will repay the deviation. It is a thoroughly grand Warwickshire panorama of ever-changing scenes, disclosing the marked characteristics of the noble old county. Besides, it is very joyous to speculate on the appearance of the country in Shakespeare's time; how often he must have rambled over

the same ground, paused at the same places, admired the same views, treasured up some image of grace and loveliness, and carefully stored in the chambers of his rich and wonderful brain some picture of rural life, to be written down for the world's gratification and joy. He must have felt a just and worthy pride as he looked on the fair face of his own noble county. The mere "doer" of Stratford may enter it by "rail," but the true Shakespearean will foot it from Warwick.



Mally Croft.

world is after all a negative distinction to those who boast of it. But quaint, quiet, Stratford can say far more than this. Shakespeare was not only born here, but he spent his last years and died here. Nor did he come back to his native town a broken-down old man, to be nursed in the last stages of decrepitude and be buried with his fathers. He returned hither at the zenith of his intellectual manhood to spend the summer of his life in the midst of the sceneries and companionship of his boyhood. Thus no other human memory ever covered so completely with its speculum the name or history of a town, or filled it with such a vivid, vital image as Shakespeare's has done to Stratford-upon-Avon.

Here,

"Like footprints hidden by a brook,
But seen on either side,"

he has left them marks on the sunny banks and across the soft, level meadows basking in the bosom of the river. The break is not

More than three hundred years have passed since the birth of that colossal genius, and many changes must have occurred in his native town within that period. The Stratford of Shakespeare's time was built principally of timber, and judging from the number of baptisms and deaths upon received principles of calculation, it contained about 1,400 inhabitants. Now it approaches as many thousands. In Shakespeare's day it was a small place of mean tenements, mostly timber buildings and thatched cottages. Many of these have yielded to the stroke of time; others have been altered. Many new houses have sprung up, but in the main, even in the "restorations" there has been manifested good taste of adherence to old lines and styles. The two old churches, authentic and splendid memorials of a distant and storied past, have been well cared for. During the reign of Queen Elizabeth and James the First, the place was nearly destroyed by fire, and as late as 1618 the Privy Council represented to the corporation

of Stratford "that great and lamentable loss had happened to that town by casualty of fire, which, of late years, hath been very frequently occasioned by means of thatched cottages, stacks of straw, furzes, and such like combustible stuff, which are suffered to be erected and made confusedly in most of the principal parts of the town without restraint." In shape Stratford somewhat resembles a cross, which is formed by the High Street running nearly north and south, and Bridge Street running nearly east and west. From these main avenues branch forth many and devious radiations. A few of the streets are broad and straight, many — particularly those on the water side—are narrow and circuitous. High and Bridge Streets intersect each other at the centre of the town, where stands the Market House, an ancient building with belfry tower and illuminated clock, facing eastward toward the old stone bridge of fourteen arches, built across the Avon by Sir Hugh Clopton in Henry VII.'s reign. It is enough to know that it is the everlasting glory of Stratford-upon-Avon—that it was the birthplace of Shakespeare!

The writer's boyhood, though numbering George Stephenson among his personal friends, knew not the transit of iron. The iron way between Liverpool and Manchester was the only passenger railway then existing, and in days gone by, when the word trains applied only to inordinate lengths of feminine skirt, the pilgrimage from London to Stratford was only accomplished on horseback or by post-chaise; or, as in times nearer our own, far better, and in truer humour of glory, in the expeditions by the stage coach in vogue so grandly in

those days. These, yoked to goodly steeds, were wont to cover the distance in some twelve hours, including the afternoon stoppage at an inn half-way house for dinner. And a veritable dinner it was. Piping hot-soup, with a noble piece of roast beef, and boiled leg of mutton at either end of the table, flanked with poultry, and a delicious ham slowly cooked to perfection. Such vegetables have never come forth from mother earth since then; the cheese knew none of the modern tricks of cream abstraction; neither had oleomargarine taken the place of true "country butter." The

ale was the pride of "mine host," and if the stomach felt chill, verily there were copper warmers at hand to render it comforting and restoring

to the weakly and less enduring. The fastest of these stages, the "High Flyer," was a crack vehicle, and did the travel half-an-hour at least under any other stage on the same road. Nothing could be more glorious to a Shakespearean than such an expedition

with a fine summer's morning for the start, and the expectation of reaching Stratford-on-Avon before sunset. All that had to be done in the interval was to luxuriate over the beauties of the country through which our journey lay, and the anticipation of the delights in store for the pilgrim at his journey's end.

On such a visit to the shrine, everything conspired to make the ideal of Shakespeare constantly present. The inn from which the "progress"

was made, and others of like quaintness at which the coach made calls in its getting out of London, were one and all antique piles within the walls, with their low gateway in front, the courtyard occupying three sides of a square; being likewise rife of gables, lattice windows, and galleries on the first upper story; these hostcleries suggested thoughts of the times when Prince Hal and fat Jack Falstaff were roysterers together. The varying landscapes, they also

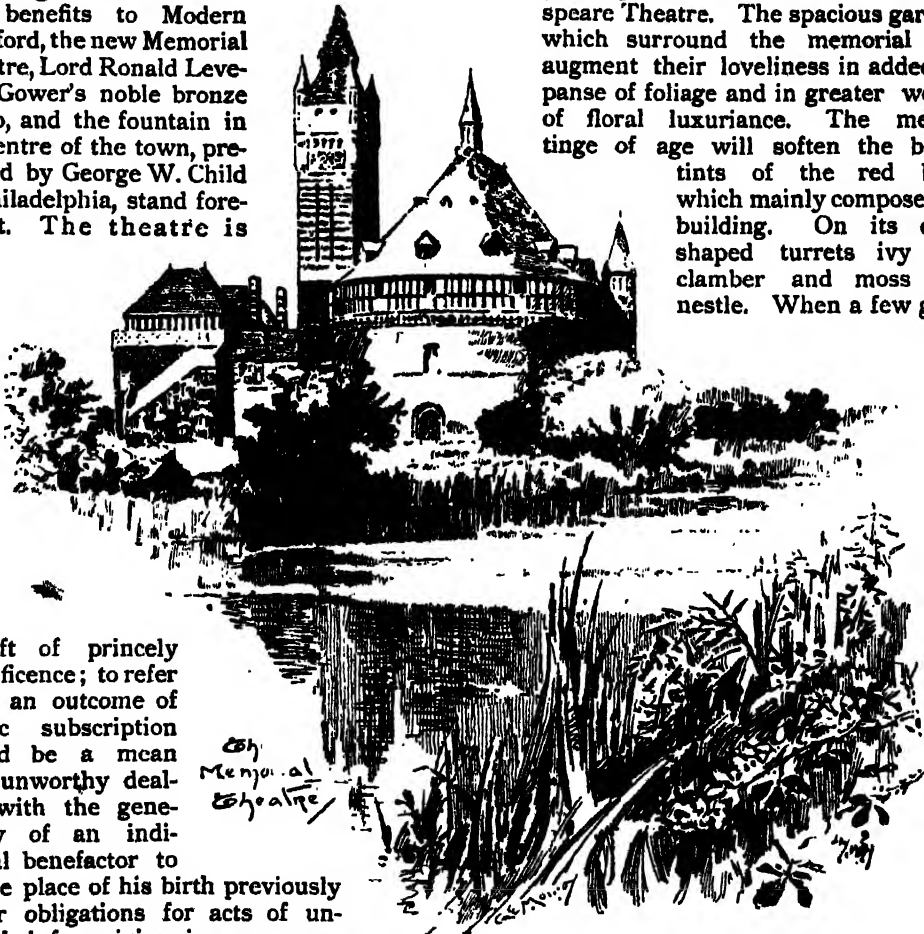


spoke eloquently of the great bard, and without difficulty in passing along one could realise the preaching of the melancholy Jaques, the love wanderings of Orlando and Rosalind, and the slothful pace of the schoolboy with his "shining morning face."

In strolling towards England's Mecca, we truly realize that

"Fairer seems the ancient city, and the
Sunshine seems more fair,
That he once has trod its pavement, that
He once has breathed its air."

Among the adornments and benefits to Modern Stratford, the new Memorial Theatre, Lord Ronald Leveson Gower's noble bronze group, and the fountain in the centre of the town, presented by George W. Child of Philadelphia, stand foremost. The theatre is



a gift of princely munificence; to refer it as an outcome of public subscription would be a mean and unworthy dealing with the generosity of an individual benefactor to the place of his birth previously under obligations for acts of unbounded free-giving, in every case exercised to the utter exclusion of self-exaltation. It should be known that the erection of this theatre, one of the most perfect in the world, so far as public aid is concerned, is an utter myth. It started out on a presumed hope that the outside world would respond, Charles Flower heading the list, with his accustomed noble liberality; but the effort ended in but a meagre response, and in the

end, Stratford's public spirited townsman had, from his own purse, to bear three-fourths of the cost, amounting, in this one gift alone, to close on thirty thousand pounds. As a Shakespearean scholar Charles Flower is second to few, in private theatricals he is understood to be *facilis princeps*, and in every matter honouring the great master, the proud inheritance of his native town, stands alone.

As the years pass, this will naturally become the principal depository of Shakespeare relics. A Dramatic College will grow up in association with the Shakespeare Theatre. The spacious gardens which surround the memorial will augment their loveliness in added expanse of foliage and in greater wealth of floral luxuriance. The mellow tinge of age will soften the bright tints of the red brick which mainly composes the building. On its cone-shaped turrets ivy will clamber and moss will nestle. When a few gene-

rations have passed, the old town of Stratford will have adopted this now youthful stranger into the race of her venerated antiquities. The same air of poetic mystery which rests now upon his cottage and his grave will diffuse itself around his memorial; and a remote posterity looking back to the men and the ideas of to-day, will remember with grateful pride that English-speaking

people of the nineteenth century, though they could confer no honour upon the great name of Shakespeare, yet honoured themselves in consecrating this temple to his memory.

In front of the Memorial Theatre stands the magnificent Bronze Group of Shakespeare characters, the marvellous production

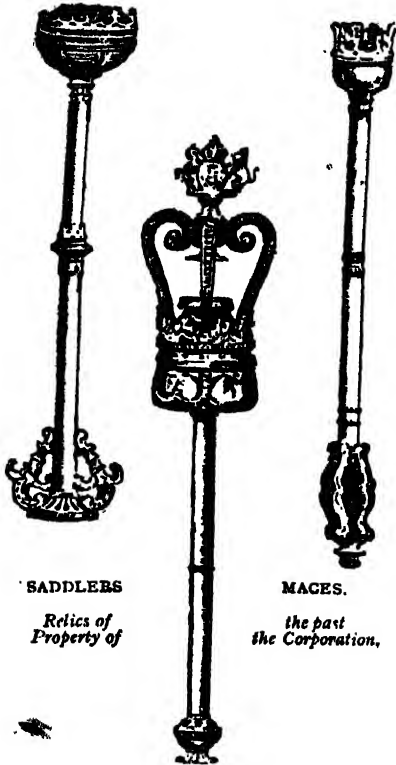
Already numerous portraits of celebrated actors, and other paintings of marked interest to Shakespearean students, have been presented to the trustees, and now adorn the halls and staircases of this noble building. As time advances, these good examples will find followers. Doubtless discretion will be



of Lord Ronald Leveson Gower, a very masterpiece of artistic power and skill, the votive free offering of this foremost gifted sculptor, an imperishable monument to Shakespeare and his own fame, as of its generous bestowal on the town, the birth and resting place of the immortal. This masterpiece of art fronts the theatre, the central figure looking towards the shrine.

exercised as to the works to be accepted, or in kind eagerness to help, the available space may be too rapidly filled with a class of works, possibly of questionable merit. No fear need be entertained but that time will give the trustees abundant opportunities of securing works of high merit and of becoming celebrity as theatrical characters and subjects.

We may be sure that wherever Shakespeare wandered among the villages and country around his Stratford home he worked up all the material he saw. No colour in the sky but he painted it on his canvas; no flower, no tree, but he grafted it on his verse. There was no old



SADDLERS

*Relics of
Property of*

MACES.

*the past
the Corporation.*

snatch, "no trivial fond records, no saws of books, no forms," which he heard, without, like his own Hamlet, copying it

"Within the book and volume of his brain."

The pretended tradition that he was a miser must have been intended to apply to the riches of the mind, for, verily, he saved and hoarded up all that ever entered the storehouse of his brain. Listen to what he puts into the mouth of Pandarus ("Troilus and Cressida," Act iv., scene 4.) "Let us cast away nothing, for we may live to have need of such a verse." Who shall doubt his acting up to this principle?

The pleasure of associating neighbourhoods as subjects of special scenes and passages will ever continue. Into adjoining counties we wander as placing Justice Shallow's house in Gloucestershire, where Davy (2nd part of "King Henry IV.," Act v., scene 3,) serves the

guests with "leather coats," a delicately flavoured apple, still well known and approved in all the county. Christopher Sly runs into debt at an ale-house at Wincot, near to Stratford, and Davy beseeches Justice Shallow (2nd part of "King Henry IV.," Act v., scene 1) "to countenance William Visor of Wincot, against Clement Perkes, of the Hill"; and it is interesting to know that to the present time, whoever held Cherry Orchard Farm here is generally called Mr. M. or Mr. N. of the Hill.

The learned biographer tries to impress on us that all that can be said is that here in Stratford was Shakespeare born, and here he died; here in the archives of the town the only information about him and his family exists; and here, still more important, is the country where he rambled when a boy, and which he loved when a man; and here people still come, day after day, on a pilgrimage to his house, showing that hero-worship is not dead, proving that even in these days the world pays homage to its great men. What more can be desired?

It is a most happy circumstance that he should have been born in

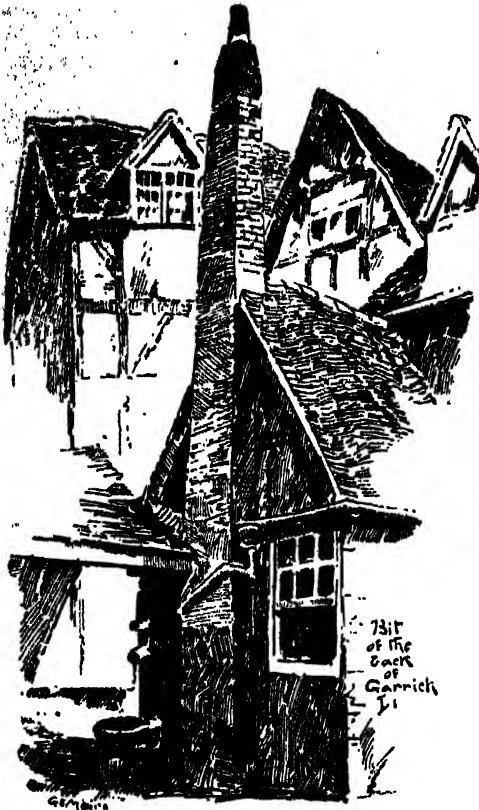
That shire which we the Heart of England well may call,

as his fellow-countryman Drayton sings, and that his childhood should have fallen amidst such true rural English scenery; for it is from the storehouse of childhood that in after-years we draw so much wealth. Happy indeed was it that his home should have been amongst the orchards and woodlands round Stratford, and the meadows of the Avon. The perfection of quiet English scenery is it, such as he himself has drawn in the "Midsummer Night's Dream," and the "Winter's Tale," and "As You Like It," and a hundred places. Who will not hold the theory of the effects of local causes on a poet's mind, remembering what the poets themselves have said? Coleridge declared that the memories



HOUSE BOUGHT BY SHAKESPEARE IN 1602.

of his youth were so graven on his mind that when a man, and far away from the spot, he could still see the river Otter flow.



ing close to him, and hear its ripple as plainly as when in years long past he wandered by its side; and Jean Paul Richter, when lamenting how greatly the absence of the sea had affected his writings, exclaimed, "I die without ever having seen the ocean; but the ocean of eternity I shall not fail to see." And just as climate modifies the physical condition of a nation, so scenery affects the mental condition of a poet. The saying of Thucydides, ἀνδρῶν ἐπιφανῶν πᾶσα γῆ τόπος, will bear reversing, and all the earth is as truly the birthplace of a great man as his grave; yet we believe that the quiet fields round Stratford, and the gentle flow of the Avon, so impressed themselves upon Shakespeare's mind, that his nature partook of their gentleness and quietness.

Take any of his plays, and we find glimpses there of the scenery round Stratford. His maidens ever sing of "blue-veined violets," and "daisies pied," and "pansies that are for thoughts," and "ladies' smocks all silver-white," that still stud the meadows of the Avon. We catch pictures of the willows that grow ascaunt the brooks, showing the

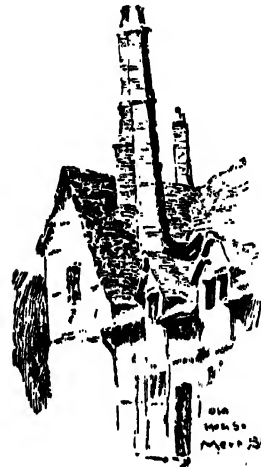
under part of their leaves, so white and hoar, in the stream; and of orchards, too, when

"The moon tips with silver all the fruit-tree tops."

It is no exaggeration to say that nowhere in England are meadows so full of beauty as those round Stratford. Look on them by the riverside in early spring burnished with gold; and then later, a little before hay-harvest, chased with orchisses, and blue and white milk-wort, and yellow rattle-grass, and tall moon-daisies: and nowhere are woodlands sweeter than those round Stratford, filled with the soft green light made by the budding leaves, and paved with the golden ore of primroses, and their banks veined with violets. The finest part of Drayton's "Polyolbion" is the thirteenth book, where he describes the scenery of his native Warwickshire, and of his "old Arden." He is describing the country in Shakespeare's time, Drayton being born only one year before Shakespeare:—

Brave Warwick, that abroad so long advanced
her Bear,
By her illustrious Earls renowned everywhere:
Above her neighbouring shires which always bore
her head,
My native county, then, which so brave spirits
hast bred,
If there be virtues yet remaining in thy earth,
Or any good of thine thou bredst into my birth,
Accept it as thine own, whilst now I sing of thee,
Of all thy later brood the unworthiest though I
be.

When Phœbus lifts his head out of the watery
wave,
No sooner doth the earth her flowery bosom
brave,





REMAINS OF CELLARS IN JUDITH QUINEY'S—
SHAKESPEARE'S DAUGHTER—HOUSE.

At such time as the year brings on the pleasant spring,
But Hunt's up to the morn, the feather'd sylvan sing;
And, in the lower grove, as on the rising knoll,
Upon the highest spray of every mounting pole,
There quiresters are perched, with many a speckled breast:
Then from her burnish'd gates the goodly glittering East
Gilds every mountain top, which late the humorous night
Bespangled had with pearl, to please the morning's sight;
On which, the mirthful quires, with their clear open throats
Unto the joyful morn so strain their warbling notes,
That hills and valleys ring, and e'en the echoing air
Seems all composed of sounds about them everywhere.
The throstle with shrill sharps, as purposely he sung
To awake the listless sun, or chiding that so long
He was in coming forth that should the thickets thrill;
The woosel near at hand, that hath a golden bill,
As nature him, had mark'd, of purpose t' let us see
That from all other birds his tunes should different be;
For with their vocal sounds they sing to pleasant May;
Upon his dulcet pipe the merle doth only play.
When, in the lower brake, the nightingale hard by,
In such lamenting strains the joyful hours doth ply,
As though the other birds she to her tunes would draw.

But the passage does but faint justice to the sweetness of the birds in the Warwickshire woodlands. The reader will remember how in "the Midsummer Night's Dream," Shakespeare sings of the nightingale, and the

"ousel-cock with his orange tawney bill," and the "throstle with his notes so true"; and they may still all be heard singing as sweetly as ever in the woods around Stratford.

All this, and the tenderness that such beauty gives, we find in the pages of Shakespeare; and it is not too much to say that he painted them, because they were ever associated in his mind with all that he held precious and dear, both of the earliest and the latest scenes of his life.

It was well that Shakespeare was born here. And we dwell especially upon his love for flowers,—a love always manifested by our great poets: by Spenser, and Chaucer, and Milton, who seem to have regarded them with a human sympathy, and to endow them, too, with human feelings. So Shakespeare loved, as Lord Herbert of Cherbury would have said, "our fellow-creatures the plants"; and so speak Imogen and Perdita of them, and so, too, Ophelia. Violets Ophelia would have given to her brother; but they died all, when her father died. We dwell also upon this love for flowers, because we must remember that God has given them, as it were, as a peculiar gift to the poor (that is, to the great body of mankind), for their delight and



Memorial
Tomb

Presented by Geo. Child, of Philadelphia



surely, too, it was well that he was born amongst country rustics, and that from the scenes of early life he was able to gather strength, and to idealize, without weakening their reality, his Christopher Slys, his Quinces the carpenters, and his Snugs the joiners, such as he knew in his boyhood. In painting these rough forms so lovingly



we may detect Shakespeare's true greatness of mind, and the simple thought that Nature has made the most numerous of the world's family, these same so-called common men, might inspire us with a wish to know and to love them. By painting them, Shakespeare could better paint the complexities and trouble of daily life, with its hard toil, such as will last as long as the world lasts. These things may not in themselves appear of the importance we rate them; we know, however, that by them millions of human beings are strangely affected; and we cannot too often repeat that Shakespeare's chief excellence lies in this, that he has not drawn mere lay-figures, but human, breathing, complex men and women—not Romans, not Greeks, but simply men; that he has never obtruded mere party creeds, but given us true religion; never painted mere finite systems, but true perennial human sympathy; and that he has never forgotten the broad principle, that whether Saxon or Celt, Jew or Gentile, we are all brothers; that, in fact, to use his own words, he has ever "held the mirror up to Nature," reflecting there all forms and shapes, but reflecting them with the charity that looks upon a brother's shortcomings in pity, knowing well how utterly impossible it is to judge another.

their contemplation. Other things they have not—pictures, nor gardens, nor libraries, nor sculpture galleries; but flowers they always have, and it is the contemplation and the love of them that distinguishes us from the beasts of the field.

Happy, indeed, therefore, was Shakespeare's lot to have been born in the country amongst such scenes! far happier than befell his great fellow-poets, Spenser and Milton, both born in the turmoil of London. And

Well would it be if the so-styled Christians of our day and time inherited but a tithe of his grand catholic spirit. He knew and felt love in the Almighty's intended sense. *There are no fewer than two thousand one hundred and sixty-three lines in our Great Author's works in which the word "Love" is mentioned.*

vestige remains of the old parsonage immediate surroundings. The present parsonage is situate on the other side of the road, and is not without interest, having been tenanted by the poet Ingon, a former vicar. It is situate exactly opposite the site of its predecessor,



**SNITTERFIELD:
JOHN SHAKESPEARE'S BIRTH-PLACE.
OLD STRATFORD.**



SNITTERFIELD—the village in which the poet's father was born, and in which his family had been many years freeholders and residents—is one of the loveliest in the county of Warwick, and is distant only some five miles from Stratford.

Wondrously changed and improved as is the Snitterfield of to-day from what it was in John Shakespeare's time, our interest wanders back to the past. The then vicarage house, afterwards used as the Parish Schools, nestled within the God's Acre, on the northern side of the church, close on the road between two venerable and fine yew trees of age coeval with the sacred edifice itself. The main trunks of these ancients have yielded to time, but from their bases new life has sprung, forming side stems already familiar to numerous generations and to more yet to follow. No other

and boasts of three ash trees planted by the sister of the poet. The magnificent lime trees, admittedly second to none in the kingdom, rising solemnly out of the churchyard as they do, and with branches flung up into the sky, and with breadth and foliage of corresponding beauty and grandeur, shut out entirely the north side of the church and the tower itself from roadside gaze. Through what blessed generations of years these glorious limes have lived and thriven! They are

*The
Approach
to
Snitterfield*



John Shakespeare's
Birthplace
and
Home

a noble piece of architecture such as none but God himself could build, waking up in budding infancy, filling the air at blossom time with their sweetest of perfumes, and casting off their clothing at eve time of each year of their long tenancy of the beautiful God's Acre!

Resting in this commandingly situated God's Acre at Snitterfield, surrounded with its numerous generations of sleeping tenantry, those who have obeyed the hallowed touch of time and are dust to dust, there is much to reflect on. The visits John Shakespeare and Mary Arden frequently paid it on their journeyings over from her home at Wilmcote, the conviction of their more than illustrious son also having made it a continual goal of worship with Sweet Anne, renders the spot attractive and hallowed in the highest degree. The fact of it being the temple in which his family had for many years worshipped would impart a sacredness to all around, and especially would the noble trees prove objects of attraction. Carrying the mind back over the three centuries that have rolled by since the father, mother, and son were in the habit of worshipping here, the trees—especially the yews

and limes, according to the known growth and age to which in many proved instances such have attained—have passed through comparatively little change. William Shakespeare, we thus know, looked upon them in much the same condition as they now exist; the main trunks of the two yews on the site of the old parsonage may have yielded even a century before his day, but the venerably grand one on the south side of the church, we may be assured, remains much as he looked upon it. We may feel certain he beheld these and the neighbouring limes with more correct know-



Old farm buildings at far end of Snitterfield, beyond the church—adjoining was the site of cottage and farm known as Warford's Corner, and also Birmon's Field, occupied by the Shakespeares after John's removal to Stratford.

ledge of their several ages than any visitors, however skilled in tree lore, have since brought to bear on their age and history. In his time, the Wellingtonias of California, with records of more than 2,000 years—one is stated on the high authority of Sir J. D. Hooker to have attained to 3,500 years—had not dawned upon the eastern world, but he had heard and read of yew trees whose longevity was placed at 3,200 years, and of then existing cedars of

of nobly proportioned liberality, his family identifying themselves in all around; a daughter whose name and acts of true charity and loveliness in every day's life and round, endear her in deep affection to the inmates of every cottage, and where her presence in sickness is even more frequent than in health. "Miss Annie" is the gentle spirit of all the country round, ever Welcome! as sweetly sounds the title of her father's park and mansion. R. N. Philips was for many



Lebanon, contemporaries of Solomon, so also of oaks attaining to 1,650 years, and of lime trees of the species present to his view on the north side of Snitterfield churchyard aging up to 1,100 years. Walnut trees of one thousand years have not been uncommon, and the tree adjoining the residence of his father in Snitterfield village was beheld by him in its prime. On his journeys to and from London and Stratford he would have seen the mighty oak at Magdalen College in Oxford, and which stood there when Alfred the Great founded the University some 900 years before, and which was no great age for an oak, so we may rest assured such objects were seen by him with higher pleasure and more correct knowledge of life than we in our time realize.

What has made the Snitterfield of to-day the charming pattern Auburn it is? A ruling squire of large means, and with heart

years one of the representatives of his county; the now later years of life are wisely given to the enjoyment of rural peace, the reward of an energetic, well-spent life.

John Shakespeare, the poet's father, was one of two sons of Richard Shakespeare, a farmer of this village of Snitterfield. Henry, his brother, remained in his native village, John settling in Stratford about 1551 as a tenant of Robert Arden, of Wilmcote, whose daughter Mary, the youngest of seven daughters, the co-heiresses of Robert Arden, of Wilmcote, in the parish of Aston Cantlow, became, in 1557, as will hereafter be seen, his wife, and a very fortunate alliance it proved in every way to him. In the year 1550 Robert Arden, Mary's father, executed a deed providing for the conveyance to three of his daughters of certain lands and

premises in the village of Snitterfield, close to Stratford, Richard, the father of John Shakespeare, being the then tenant. This Richard being clearly the father of John Shakespeare, it is easy to understand how the latter became acquainted with Mary, and his subsequent marriage with her, a relationship confirmed by further facts from the records of the time—that John Shakespeare had a brother Henry, and that he lived

- 1566, October 13, Gilbert [Was living at Stratford in 1609].
 1569, April 15, Joan [Married William Hart of Stratford, and is mentioned in Shakespeare's will. She died in 1646].
 1571, September 28, Anne [Died in 1579].
 1574, March 11, Richard [Died at Stratford in 1613. Nothing is known of his history].
 1580, May 3, Edmund [Became an actor, and died in London in December, 1607].

These parochial records warrant the assumption that John Shakespeare and Mary Arden were married some time between November 24th, 1556, and September 15th, 1558, the former being the date of Robert Arden's will, the latter the date of the baptism of their first child. The first-born, Joan, died in her infancy. The second, Margaret, died before she was a year old. William, the third child, was baptised April 26th, and commonly reported to have been born April 23rd, 1564. He was, therefore, the oldest of the family, except those who died in infancy.

There is now living at the far end of Snitterfield, about three hundred yards beyond the Parish Church—a saddler, by no means juvenile, whose father died some years since, at over eighty years of age, and whose grandfather was of the like tough continuance. Until lately, the Bryan family lived in the identical

cottage formerly the home in which Richard Shakespeare died, but which is now pulled down. The old Shakespeare outbuildings remain, but their rickety condition will ere long render them of the past. In the time of John Shakespeare, this spot was known as "Warford's Corner," and so much of the land about it as belonged to the Shakespeare house was called "Old Orchard," an orchard, an adjoining piece, also their property, being known as "Birmon's Field." Until John Shakespeare's removal to Stratford, he resided with his father and brother in a picturesque old homestead, with a blacksmith's smithy adjoining, neither of



old Walnut tree
Snitterfield old

at Snitterfield, and continued there after his brother's departure for the more ambitious career offered to him at Stratford, as a means of renewing the position in life formerly held by his family. Richard's (the father of John) death is not recorded. John's joining hands with the heiress, Mary Arden, was clearly a wise step. They had a large family, the baptisms of eight children being recorded in the Stratford register:—

- 1558, September 15, Joan [Died in infancy].
 1562, December 2, Margaret [Died in the following year, 1563].
 1564, April 26, WILLIAM.



which now exist. The old home has been pulled down, and the site, which was in the village near an old elm, formerly sheltering the parish stocks—is occupied by a modern residence. On the opposite side of the road was a public-house called the Malt Shovel. The adjoining land supports a magnificent old walnut tree, whose good nuts the Shakespeares cracked and ate for many years. In the park of S. S. Sanders, a Birmingham merchant's genial home, just opposite, now stand the trunks of oaks, which were in their prime when Shakespeare, too, rejoiced in health and strength. In those days an open stream of water flowed down the village. Haliwell Phillips, in his laudable pursuit of what he deemed more important information, overlooked Snitterfield, but before his death he realized the mistake he had made. Addressing Saddler Bryan, he remarked, "Not many years to come, people will visit Snitterfield by the thousands; it has escaped me, but others will point out the great interest to Shakespearians."

Tradition has passed down through the since generations of Wilmcote folk that Mary Arden and her lover, John Shakespeare, were accustomed during their "courting time" to attend afternoon service in this church, and who would seek to doubt it? The to and fro distances from her Wilmcote home were lovely walks at all seasons, within the compass of wanderings such as lovers could not fail to find specially charming at any time of the year. The sound of the bidding bell as it met their ear on entering Snitterfield village, following the chimes, whose sweet tones had greeted them, softened by country sounds, half way from Wilmcote, could not fail to kindle devotional feelings in Mary's young heart; specially impressive, we will believe, must these sounds have been on her, destined to bestow on the world its more than greatest poet. Pleasant were those Sabbath stillnesses. As they

approached the church, they would meet members of their several families and farmers of the neighbourhood who had donned their blue coats and bright metal buttons, who, with their wives and children, were following along the bye-path and field to "the stated means of grace." The new worship had not then long taken the place of the Roman form: great indeed was the change. The minister, the clerk, the choir leader—it would be difficult to know which was greatest in his own estimation. In those days, wherever Puritanism had gained footing, the church choir was wonderfully energetic. The leader, with his bulgy face, how great a man was he! In loud whispers he made known to all around him what the tunes were to be, and in anxious fervour of desire to begin, he and his fellows of violin and clarionet found difficulty in restraining their impatience. At length the ruling spirit would steam off over the quavers like a red-crested swelling game-cock, his brood of instrumentalists and songsters following in the various degrees of time. After all, there was devotion in it, and it inspired the simple country people with Sabbath reverential feelings. Then, as now, many would fall asleep in sermon time. But what of that? Did not the disciples upon the mountain fail to watch one hour, yet were graciously forgiven? There were then, as now, young, graceful, cherry-lipped damsels who would permit their eyes to wander from the black gown in the pulpit to the pew where an admired one was sitting. The old story is as young now as it was in the days when Mary Arden and John Shakespeare oftentimes took rather cir-



cutious routes through bye-paths that they might worship together in Snitterfield Church. The Anno Domini has changed, but human hearts remain as ever. The same breeze now, as then, through summer service time blows fragrantly through the unblinded windows, and the rustling of the lime leaves intermingles as pleasantly with the



hymns, and fills up the pauses in the sermon. Now, as then, when the service is over, many gather in knots at the porch, whilst others stroll in the church-yard, gazing at and studying the stones with prodigious inscriptions, "sacred to the memory" of wonderfully good men and women, and we will hope that the spirit of God's peace now rests upon them all.

As the spring-time came, how impressively

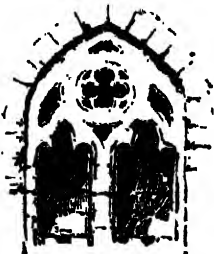
delightful to Mary Arden would be those walks over to Snitterfield on praise and prayer bound! Then, as now, April advent would be mild and gracious as becomes a fair and gentle portress opening the gates of spring. Her breathings, too quiet to wave the budding branches, just suffice to stir them and strew the ground with the golden scales cast from the buds in bursting. A little later on, the sparsely-gemmed hedges, thickened up so that the cottage gardens encountered by the wayside would be hardly visible through their bare ribs, whilst little bunches of tight-clenched buds gave abundant promise of the sweet-breathed shell-petaled hawthorn flowers. A little while and the blackcap had arrived, and would herald to the happy pair as they journeyed on, that the season of bird love had come, and that his mate was on her way to join him, and, therefore, sounded his try-call or lesson practice preparatory to contesting with his fellows which shall sing the loudest. No warbler has

more compass in song than the blackcap: the whole wood rings with its music. Then, as now, the old pollard trees abounded in the meadows throughout the region of Stratford, and in the advancing days of spring assumed such scanty drapery as had been their wear for many a season. The coy ash trees had begun to fringe over with their feather foliage; the ruddy, bushy clothing at the base of the elms had then, as now, changed into a surprise of glorified green; the low shoots from the stump of the old oak tree in the hedgerow had brought forth their wealth of soft crumpled young red leaves; the elders on the bank had gotten a deep, full garment of green; above the ash-hued stem of the maples there had appeared the ever-

numberless array of small maroon-tinged fists. The whitethroat, although not rivalling the blackcap, then, as now, gave forth its short song uttered whilst excursioning upon the wing, and the pretty chat, in shadiest cover hid, contributed to the concert which greeted them all along their romantic walk, its clearer and sweeter notes soft and mellow as those of the blackbird. During the spring season of joyous and reflective walks to prayer they would realize



that all bird life united in praise, and that Sabbath morns specially developed their fullest powers. The copse would ring with the laugh of the willow wren, the chiff-chaffs ceaselessly announced their presence in the open firmament of God, by notes of piercing sharpness as of a fife, yet prolonged and drawn out with a swelling modulation, soft as can be breathed by flute. The woodpecker cried as he left tree for tree; the robin then, as now, put on his "fuller crimson; the livelier iris shines upon the burnished dove."



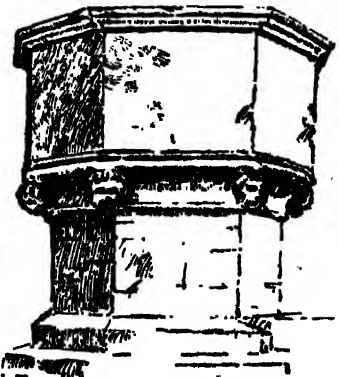
Facing
Stratford
Church

The lark, the very emblem of freedom, floating in the thin air, with outstretched wings, moving its little head delightedly, first to one side and then to the other, soaring aloft until a mere speck on the blue vault of heaven; and then pouring down its showers of song, would unite them in the happiness

of all around, and urge conjoint prayer and praise to the Giver of all good. Then, as now, the spring merged into summer. There were new birds to greet, new clothing for the meadows, new carpets for the woods, new glories for the trees prior to the year having done with extravagantly profuse promises. Then, as now, blossom and freshness of leaf were cast away as things that but impede it in the hurry after perfection, which, though a dream on earth, shall be true in heaven.

John Shakespeare, as already stated, settled in Stratford about 1551, six years previous to his marriage. It may have been somewhat earlier. There is, however, positive evidence that on the 29th of April, 1552, "Johanne Shakspeare," doubtless the father of the poet, according to a register written in Latin, was fined for having neglected to keep in the required state of cleanliness the ground near his house in "Hendley Strete." Nothing is traceable of him until the 17th of June, 1556, when a proceeding was instituted in the Stratford Bailiff Court against John

"Shacksper" for the recovery of a debt of £8. In the Latin record of this suit the word "glover" in English is attached to his name. On the 2nd of October in the same year, he became the purchaser of two copyhold houses in Stratford, one in Greenhill Street, and the other in Henley Street—thus formally recorded at the time:—"The jurors of the leet present that George Turner had alienated to John Shakspeare and his heirs, one tenement with a garden and croft and other premises in Grenahyll Street held



Ancient
font in
Stratford
Church

by the lord at an annual quit-rent; and John Shakspeare, who is present in court and does fealty, is admitted to the same." The same jurors "present that Edward West has alienated to John Shakspeare one tenement and a garden adjacent in Henley Street, who is in the same way admitted upon fealty done to the lord." Here, then, is John Shakespeare, before his marriage, the purchaser of two copyholds in Stratford, one having a garden and enclosed field, the other situate in Henley Street, and which he made his home, also with a garden attached. In 1570, fourteen years after making these purchases, he is shown to have

the high social condition of gentleman; henceforward in all registers and records he was styled Master John Shakespeare. What more can be needed in proof of his social position?

For many years afterwards, he was one of the leading, or in later diction, "most respectable" inhabitants of Stratford. It is probable that he did not continue for any length of time to carry on the trade of a glover, but that he early devoted himself to agricultural pursuits, and to the various occupations which might enable him in a country town to turn his small landed property to the most profitable



The Old
Schoolhouse Wykefield

been holding, and he probably had held for some years previously, as tenant under William Clopton, a meadow of fourteen acres, with its appurtenances, called Ingon, at the annual rent of eight pounds. This rent, equivalent at least to forty pounds of our present money, would indicate that the appurtenance included a house, a very good home. This meadow of Ingon formed part of a large property known by that name near Clopton House. Be it remembered that John Shakespeare on his marriage came into possession of Asbies; so here we find him living at that time on his own land, renting the land of others, actively engaged in the business of cultivation in an age when tillage was becoming rapidly profitable, so much so that men of wealth often thought it better to take the profits direct than to share them with the tenant. He may in truth be said to have passed out of the state of mere yeoman into

account. Rowe says that he was a "considerable dealer in wool," and Aubrey that he was a "butcher." The former statement may be correct to this extent, that he sold different descriptions of produce raised upon his own land. As to Aubrey's statement, it is only named here to denounce it as worthless. Aubrey, termed in books of the day, "an old gossip," was not a man of education, and would be easily imposed upon when smoking his pipe and quaffing strong ale in the snug chimney-corner of a Stratford inn. It is most remarkable that the biographical chapter of most editions of Shakespeare's works fell back on grim unreliable old Aubrey, who, in the absence of any account of the great luminary, went forth to manufacture some. The old Henley Street home was, about fifty years after Shakespeare's death, rented to a butcher: hence the story. No other foundation for it ever existed.



It is most extraordinary, how, for centuries, these absurd stories of Aubrey have been accepted, seeing their palpably evident contradictions. Aubrey says of his immortal son, "when he was a boy he exercised his father's trade," subsequently adding, "this William being inclined naturally to poetry and acting, came to London, I guess, about eighteen. He understood Latin pretty well, for he had been in his younger years schoolmaster in the country." Well might Charles Knight exclaim, "Killer of calves, schoolmaster, poet, actor,—all these occupations crowded into eighteen years! Honest Aubrey, truly thine is a rope of sand, wherein there are no knots to cut or to untie!"

In the year 1556 John Shakespeare brought an action against "Henry Fyld,"

for unjustly detaining from him a quantity of barley; and in the year 1564 he sold to the corporation some timber—"a pec tymbur." In this latter year he is credited with the highest sum, with one exception, contributed by any burgess, not an alderman, to the relief of the poor. In the year 1579 we find the word "yoman" attached to his name, and he is never designated as a glover, except upon that single occasion in the year 1556. He may probably have had an interest in business of the kind, but granting this, it should be borne in mind that in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, and prior thereto, there was a different standard for the rank of glovers, hosiers, haberdashers, and others engaged in various household trades and occupations in the country towns of England from that which obtains at the present day. They then held foremost positions amongst the burghers; none but such as the neighbouring Hero of Charlecote, destined for unenvied immortalization, or other great lords of the soil, who stood aloof on the platform known as that of the "great landed gentry," were in higher estimation.

Municipal distinctions soon accompanied the social respectability to which John Shakespeare attained. In the year 1565, or during the four or five succeeding years, he passed through the offices of an alc-taster (an officer commissioned to look after the assize of ale, bread, and corn), a constable of the borough, an "affecror," (an officer whose duty it was to determine the amount of fines to be imposed for offences to which no express penalty was attached by statute), and also chamberlain. In the year 1565 he was elected an alderman; and from Michaelmas, 1568, to Michaelmas, 1569, he filled the office of high bailiff, or head of the corporation. From the month of September, 1571, to the month of September, 1572, he acted as chief alderman; and here closes the list of the local honours to which he attained.

"'Tis only title thou disdain'st in her, the which I can build up."

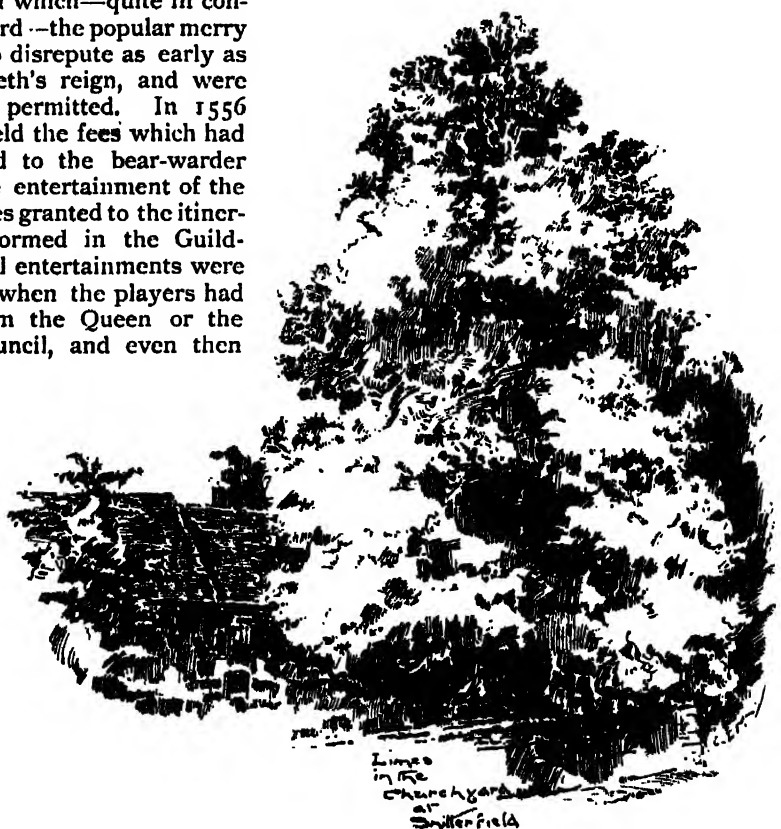
—*All's Well That Ends Well*, Act ii., scene 2.

Stratford Aldermen of Shakespeare's period come down to us as early models of the good feeding type, who through the many generations since then have so distinguished London and other of our corporations. They knew how to make their lives pleasant in many ways, they eat and drank of the best, had keen noses for aroma

of venerable port, and could with faintest sniff detect delicate Burgundies, as were they at home in Muscat and Rhenish liquids, while as to Sack, the quantity consumed by these dignitaries was limited only by stomach capacity. This is evidenced by the Corporation accounts, in which these good things form no small item on festive occasions. For example, we even find them ordering two kegs of sturgeon in the year 1602, for which the Chamberlain had to pay the goodly sum of 44 shillings and 4 pence. When we remember that these belonged to the same generation of citizens who were fined for leaving dung heaps in the street, and for uncleansed gutters, there is seen a strange mixture of the refinements of a town life and a kind of primitive and rural state of affairs.

One main enjoyment with the worthy Burghers was getting a company of theatrical performers to play in the old schoolhouse of the Guild. In connexion with this, a life-like picture of such a performance in a building of this character by players of the very class instanced is supplied by the city archives of Leicester, in which—quite in contradistinction to Stratford—the popular merry makings had come into disrepute as early as the first year of Elizabeth's reign, and were at that time no longer permitted. In 1556 the Corporation withheld the fees which had until then been granted to the bear-warder who kept bears for the entertainment of the people, and also the fees granted to the itinerant players who performed in the Guild-hall. In 1582 theatrical entertainments were even forbidden except when the players had obtained a licence from the Queen or the Lords of the Privy Council, and even then the Mayor and Corporation were first to witness the performance. So also when in 1586 the Earl of Worcester's players came to Leicester to play, the Mayor provided them with a dinner to induce them to quit the town without giving a theatrical entertainment; the excuse made by the Mayor was that the day being a Friday (the 6th of March)

the time was not a convenient one. To this, however, the players would not agree, and insisted on their right to give a performance, as they held a licence from the Earl of Worcester. They declared to the Mayor (whom they met in the street) that they meant to give the play at the inn where they were staying, whether he allowed it or not; and they even let fall "dyvers other evyll and contemptuous words." Further, by way of showing their contempt of the Mayor, they perambulated the streets with drums and trumpets, and when the Mayor had them arrested by his officers, the two chief culprits were punished, those who had spoken "the aforesaid words." One of them did not belong to the Earl of Worcester's troop, but is called "Lord Harbord's man." These two men apologised to the Mayor, and prayed him not to inform their master of what had occurred; the Mayor thereupon gave them permission to give a play that same evening at their tavern, on condition that before they began they should read out to the audience the licence granted them by the Mayor and renew their apology.



There is little doubt that John Shakespeare, the father of the poet, was what in these later days would be termed a "gentleman farmer." The description given in Hollinshed's "Chronicles," of a certain class of Englishmen in the days of Elizabeth, fits the character and worldly circumstances of John Shakespeare. "This sort of people," says Hollinshed, "have a certain pre-eminence and more estimation than labourers and the common sort of artificers; and these commonly live wealthily, keep good houses, and



travel to get riches. They are, also, for the most part, farmers or gentlemen, or, at the leastwise artificers; and with grazing, frequenting markets, and keeping of servants (but not idle servants, as the gentlemen do, but such as both get their own and part of their master's living) do come to great wealth, inasmuch that many of them are able, and do buy lands, of unthrifty gentlemen; and often setting their sons to the schools, to the Universities, and to the Inns of Court, or otherwise leaving them sufficient lands,

whereupon they may live without labour, do make them by those means to become gentlemen." John Shakespeare seems to have been an incipient gentleman, somewhat after this sort.

John Shakespeare must have been one of those men, not uncommon in any age, whose worldly means bear no adequate proportion to their taste for expenditure, and their ambition to figure in a higher social position than that in which, through the chances of life, they find themselves placed, and he seems to have endured the penalty usually following such.

From the average number of baptisms and burials in Stratford register, as compared with similar statistics of population in other places, it may be taken that the population of Stratford in the time of Shakespeare was about fifteen hundred. The municipal government consisted of a bailiff, fourteen aldermen, and fourteen burgesses. The bailiff held a court once a fortnight. There was also the court-leet, which appointed ale-tasters, a class of officers to prevent the sale of any such villainous diluted and often drugged compounds too often administered to the frequenters of the village ale-house in these present days. Ale was then what it ought to be, a strength-giving drink. The court-leet appointed also "affectors," whose office it was to fine and otherwise punish citizens for various minor offences ("not cleaning the pavements, gutters, etc."), for which there was no express provision in the statutes. Oh, that such office were now revived! Last, but not least, was the "constable." John Shakespeare, the father of William, held successively all of these offices. He was on the jury of the court-leet in 1556, an ale-taster in 1557, a burgess in 1558, a constable in 1559, an affector in 1560, an alderman in 1565, and high bailiff or chief magistrate in 1568. William was four years old when his father was at the height of his municipal distinction.

One thing is noticeable in regard to this gradual elevation of John Shakespeare in the social scale. In all the registers where his name occurs prior to 1571, he is recorded simply as "John Shakespeare," or "John Shakespeare, glover," etc. But in the record of the baptism of his daughter Anne, September 28th, 1571, his name is entered "Magister Shakespeare," and ever after he is known among his neighbours, not as Goodman Shakespeare, but as Mister Shakespeare. This title of Mister was then used as we now

use that of A.M., or Rev., or M.D., only in virtue of some specific legal right. Two theories exist in regard to the cause of this change of title in the history of John Shake-

of turtle soup and choicest champagne; and a Stratford dignitary may have rejoiced in the possession of only one servitor, who combined the duty of cook, nursemaid and other domestic offices. At all events, he was soon exposed to reversed fortune; and the antiquaries in their rummaging zeal are enabled to track his footsteps through the usual unsparing processes of the law, to debt, mortgages, and as the more relentless assume, not improbably to flight or imprisonment, but for these sadder aspects there is no real confirmation. But his immortal offspring tells us:—

"The web of our life is of a mingled yarn, good and ill together."

—*All's Well That Ends Well*, Act iv. sc. 3.

The first apparent intimation of his embarrassments meets us at the commencement of the year 1578. At a hall of the corporation, held in the month of January of that year, a resolution was passed, to the effect that each of the aldermen should pay 6s. 8d.

sppeare. One is, that about that time a grant of arms was made to the family, from the Herald Office, for services in the field rendered to Henry VII. by one of their ancestors. The other theory is that John became Mister in consequence of having held the office of bailiff two years previous. One thing is clear, that John Shakespeare was then a leading man in Stratford, and consequently his son, the poet, would be sure of the best education available and consistent with his father's then position.

As far as can be seen, the substance of his property consisted of the fifty-six acres of land called Ashbies, which he had acquired through his wife; this holding, some writers say, would afford but a very insufficient foundation for maintaining the dignity of an alderman, the highest position the borough could confer, and which, they add, must have involved the cost of a correspondingly expensive domestic establishment. This, however, is all mere surmise. In our own time there are needy as well as rich aldermen. All are not daily consumers

Old road leading into Snitterfield, said to have been a favoured walk of the Shakespeares; later on known as the "King's Lane," as through it King Charles II. escaped, by riding horseback "a pillion," with Jane Lane.

for the maintenance or equipment of certain officers, with the exception of "Mr. Shaxpeare" and another member of the court, who were to be liable to a charge of only 3s. 4d. and 5s. respectively. In the month of November of the same year he was exempted from an order providing that each alderman should pay 4d. a week towards the relief of the poor; and in an account of sums levied on the inhabitants of Stratford in the month of March, 1579, for the purchase of armour and defensive weapons, his name is found among the defaulters. Again, the will of a baker, named Roger Sadler, which is dated the fourteenth November, 1578, contains a list of his debtors, and in that list two people are mentioned as owing him £5 "for the debte of Mr. John Shaksper."

There are other and more decisive proofs of the straits to which he was ultimately reduced. Misfortune had overtaken, and more and more came to press heavily upon him. In the spring of 1578 John and Mary Shakespeare mortgaged their property of Ashbies to her brother-in-law, Edmund Lambert, for the sum of

£40. In the year 1579 we find them selling to Robert Webbe their share in a property at Snitterfield, for the small amount of £4; and in the following year they parted with her reversionary interest in the same property for another sum of £40.

For fully a century before the great dramatist's time, there were Shakespeares in Warwickshire, the name extending over the whole county; in Warwick itself, in Stratford, Clifford, Snitterfield, where his

father was born, Wruxhall, Temple Balsall, Rowington, Packwood, Little Packington, Kenilworth, Charlecote, Coventry, Hampton, Lapworth, Nuneaton, Kington, and many other neighbouring districts. This general distribution has afforded wide scope for the confusion-makers, as also to the biographers

seeking to prove their own one-sided conclusions in supporting the unfounded and improbable stories which, until now, have become so interwoven in what has been termed his life, as seemingly to render their acceptance indisputable. If not for the family, there would appear to be one common origin for the name.

"Breakspear, Shakespeare, and the like," says Verstegen, "have been surnames imposed upon the first bearers of them for valour or feats of arms." Camden says that persons have frequently been named after such things as they carried; *i.e.*, pilgrims from the palms which they brought with them on their return from Jerusalem; also Longsword, Broadspear, Fortescue, or Strongshield, Breakspear, Shotbolt, Wagstaff."

Zachary Bogan, a writer close upon Shakespeare's time, maintains the name Shakespeare to be synonymous with soldier; this is proven by Homer and other ancient

writers' frequent use of the word in that sense, and justifies its adoption.

The name of Shakespeare is an extremely apposite instance of the singular forms which surnames assumed under the loose orthography of our ancestors, who appeared to have followed no guide but sound in their spelling. Shakespeare himself wrote his name variously; there are altogether five signatures assumed to be genuine autographs: three may be said to be indisputable





—one to a mortgage deed executed in 1613, William Shakspeare; a second to a conveyance from Henry Walker to the poet William Shakespeare; and one upon each of the three briefs of his will, William Shacksperc—William Shaksperc—William Shakpeare—each differing from the other. The contractions exhibited by the two first signatures neutralize their evidence, as it is with respect to the last syllable only that any doubt exists; and in regard to the signatures to the will, a sort of doubt has been attempted to be cast on the first and second by the suggestion that they might be the handwriting of the notary employed on the occasion; the third signature to the will is, however, clear and decisive. In regard to the varied spellings of the names of persons of one and the same family, it is only necessary to examine old tombstones in any old English country churchyard, and we find fathers, sons and brothers names varying in the spelling. The title-pages of the quarto editions of the plays published under his own authority during his lifetime, and also the dedicatory address to the Earl of Southampton prefixed to the poem of "Venus and Adonis," all set out his name distinctly and prominently, "William Shakespeare"; and who shall question the style by which he circulated his plays during his lifetime as the fitting one by which he shall be known to all future generations?

That we speak the tongue that Shakespeare spake is one of the proofs offered by Wordsworth in illustration of the theory that

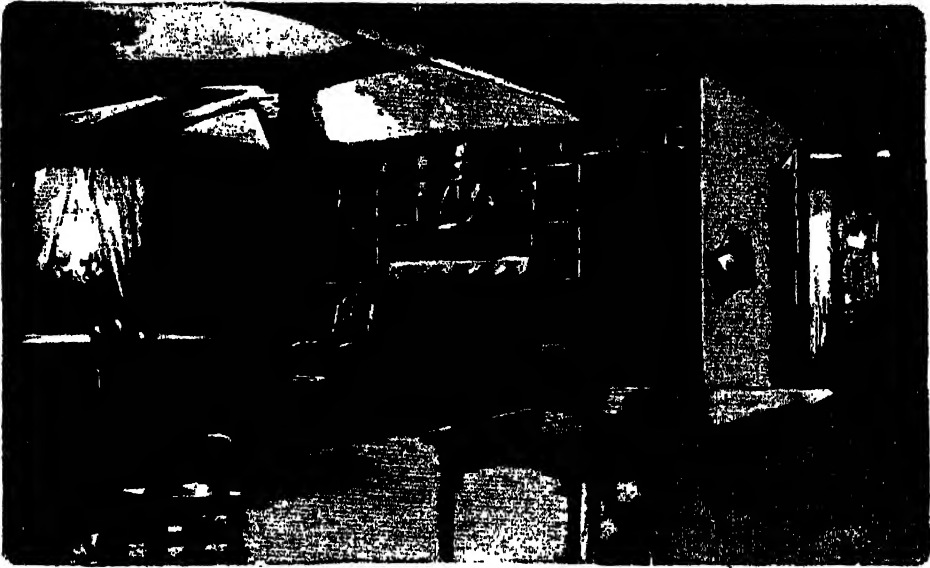
Englishmen are "sprung of earth's best blood," and have "titles manifold." Though the logic of the remark may not be clear, the feeling thereof comes home to us with peculiar force. The great men of a country are an inspiration to nobleness for the meanest; and the consciousness that we possess the same humanity in common with transcendent geniuses, who at rare historical intervals have risen to almost superhuman proportions, somehow kindles in us all the fires of a sacred ambition. We get into a habit of looking at ourselves in our grand potentialities rather than resting content on lower levels of everyday existence; and familiarity with greatness, so far from breeding contempt, transfigures us into humble likenesses of the heroes whom we worship. For all that speaks of fertility of imagination, of insight into nature, and of the many-sidedness of intellect, he stands unsurpassed, and perhaps unsurpassable, in the annals of literature; and his works are a treasury into which we dip from age to age, but can never exhaust. In modern times Goethe alone was endowed with anything approaching to a kindred power, but there is a wide gulf between Faust and Hamlet; and the Bard of Avon, in relation to the bulk of poets or dramatists who have lived since his day, is as Hyperion to a satyr. Compared with him, Schiller and the main body of writers are mere apprentices, and even Tennyson is an inditer of sweet sentimental verses. Not that, when he is absent, these writers can say nothing quickening to us, or are without any native brightening of their own. On the contrary, their voices echo also the music of the spheres, and they are stars adding real lustre to the golden glories of the sky. But who cares for a nebular



speck when Orion rises in the horizon? It is well to honour in their due degree all manifestations of genius, and to shrine in separate niches statues of all our literary benefactors, but we must reserve the meed of unmeasured praise for the unrivalled one, and award to him the central throne in the world's Valhalla of worthies. April 23rd must for ever be His Day in the Kalendar.

No county of England has its own peculiar dialect and provincialisms more marked than Warwickshire. How strongly the great

other parts of England a somewhat bad signification is attached to it. In Warwickshire we frequently hear a parent call their daughter, as a term of endearment, the "little wench." Moreover the common expression, "a chap and his wench," signifies merely a young fellow and his sweetheart. So Petruchio, in the "Taming of the Shrew" (Act v., last scene), when everything has been made pleasant, exclaims, "Why, there's a wench; come on and kiss me, Kate." Prince Hal, too ("Henry IV.," Act i., scene 2), calls



Situate opposite New Place.

master was imbued with them his plays abundantly testify; none seemed to have escaped him, as were all deemed worthy of adoption by him. Scarcely a peculiar word or expression known in the county in these present days but may be found woven into his writings! They mark, from internal evidence, not only the era, but the county in which he lived. One of the first peculiarities that strikes a stranger in Warwickshire is the use of Master among the middle and lower orders, the lower especially, for Mister. They will speak of Master Smith, the blacksmith, but never of Mr. Smith. The same use of the word is found in Sussex and Hampshire, but in Warwickshire and Sussex it is systematically observed. Shakespeare would still hear "Master Slender," "Master Fenton," and good "Master Brook," so called if they were living now, as in his own days. The word "wench," in Warwickshire means nothing more than a young woman, whereas in most

the sun "a fair hot wench in a flame-coloured taffeta." Who does not remember the witch of Brentford? ("Merry Wives of Windsor," Act iv., scene 2), "the rag, the baggage, the polecat, the runnion,"—that the jealous Ford calls her; and all will further remember the spirit, so widely different to that of his brother dramatists, in which Shakespeare adverts to witches and heretics. Perhaps in no county is the belief of witches more prominent than in Warwickshire. In all our boasted enlightenment, if Shakespeare came amongst us, he would find the race of witches not yet extinct, so long is it ere a deep-rooted credulity, springing from the soil of ignorance, and therefore not easily eradicated. The phrase, "A Dorrington witch," so called from a tumble-down village not far from where Shakespeare's crab-tree once stood, has passed into a proverb. Here, in every part of Warwickshire, Rosalind might hear her own expression of the rabbits "kindling" ("As

You Like It, Act iii., scene 2) invariably used. That prince of merry thieves, Autoly-



cus, who so lustily sings in the "Winter's Tale" (Act iv., scene 2)—

"When daffodils begin to peer,
With, heigh! the doxy over the dales,"

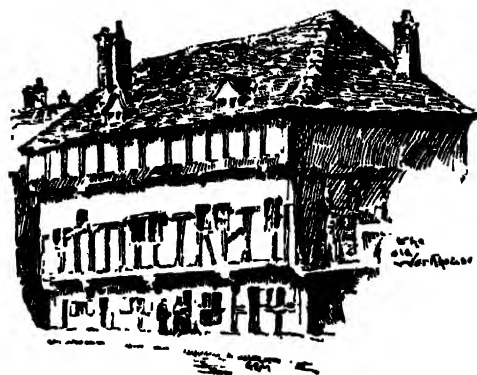
will now as ever find plenty in Shakespeare's old county who will understand, without a glossary, his cant term for a not over-virtuous maid. So, also, they know that "pugging tooth," a few lines further on in the song, meant (not as the glossary explains it, thievish), but pegging, peg tooth, *i.e.*, the canine, or dog tooth. "The child hasn't its pegging teeth," old women will say. The gadfly is still called the brize (pronounced bree); the shepherd talks of his "eanlings," *i.e.*, his lambs; the woodman of his "fardels," *i.e.*, his fagots, or kids, as they are more commonly called. It is worth noting, too, that the most uncommon words have left the more immediate neighbourhood of Stratford, and can now only be found in the more out-of-the-way places, where so-called refinement has not yet made so great progress. They will linger there only for a time; the traces of old Shakespearean lore will in these railway days rapidly yield to the ousting of more fashionable terms. The gardener still speaks of his "squashes," *i.e.*, his immature pears, as Leontes calls his son; and which rare Bully Bottom christens the mother of the fairy pear blossom. We have heard rustics talk of "go shogging off," even as Falstaff commands his bullies to do. And there are plenty of old-fashioned cooks and housekeepers who know very well what the clown's speech in

the "Winter's Tale" (Act iv., scene 2) means. "I must have saffron to colour the warden pies" (*i.e.*, composed of a species of pear and a race, *i.e.*, a stick of ginger). There are many words that in Shakespeare's day were in general use, have now gone into the category of "grandmother's words," and that are known only to the advanced in life. "Bow" still means a yoke; so Touchstone ("As You Like It," Act iii., scene 3), "As the ox hath his bow, sir, so man hath his desires." "Bavin" still means the scrapings and scraps of heather. "Batlet" remains the instrument with which linen is beaten. All around Stratford the women will speak of their "batlet tub." "Bravery" still means finery. "Broken mouth," *i.e.*, a mouth which has lost part of its teeth; "What a broken mouth you have!" is a common phrase; so also "Broken tears," *i.e.*, tears which are stopped suddenly by a person's entry. "Cage," *i.e.*, a prison, (as in "Henry VI.," 2nd part), called also "the hole." "Childing," *i.e.*, pregnant. "Claw," to flutter. "Cob-loaf," a badly set-up or lop-sided loaf, with much crust upon it. A kind of coarse baked apple dumpling also bears this name. When a boy at country boarding school, the village baker was purveyor of "cobs," very perfections of apple dumplings. "Committed," *i.e.*, cohabited. Thus, Othello to the innocent Desdemona—"What, committed, O thou publiccommoner?" (Act iv., scene 2). "Dout," literally is to do out; the peasants still say, "to dout the candle," *i.e.*, to extinguish it. "Feeders," good-for-nothing servants. "For-wearied," *i.e.*, tired out. Puck's line is worth noting, where the preposition is carried on to the verb—

"The heavy ploughman snores
All with weary task fordone."

—*Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act. v.

"Jet," *i.e.*, to strut, to walk proudly. "Inkles"





still means broidery. Housewives still speak of a piece of inkle, so the servant in the "Winter's Tale" (Act iv., scene 3) says of the supposed pedlar, "that he hath ribbands of all colours . . . inkles, cadisses." These last-named mean worsteds. "Irk," to make uneasy, "lated," *i.e.*, benighted, so in "Macbeth" (Act iii., scene 3)—

"Now spurs the 'lated traveller apace,
To gain the timely inn."

"Lifter," *i.e.*, a thief, is promoted in our days to an extension rather than diminution—as, for instance, "shop-lifter." "Loon," *i.e.*, a stupid scamp; many a tailor is still so called, since King Stephen's catch was written ("Othello," Act ii., scene 3)—where, in the music of the rhyme, it is "*loun*." The Nine Men's Morris, which Titania ("Midsummer Night's Dream," Act ii., scene 2) complains is "filled up with mud," has long since been cleared out, and the Warwickshire boys still play at it under the more common but less refined name of "Holy goly." The "Midsummer Night's Dream" is rich in local words and allusions. Thus Nick Bottom's aphorism that "man is but a *patched* fool," is a pleonasm in fact, for the word *patch* still means a fool; and Puck calls Nick himself and his friends "a crew of patches." In the same speech (Act iii., scene 2) occur the words, "an ass howl." It is still so used, both of quadrupeds and bipeds, but always in a sense implying stupidity. Again, Hermia, in the same scene, calls Helena "thou painted Maypole." "Pun," to pound. Country people now speak of "punning fat." "Pickthank," *i.e.*, an officious parasite, though often used to convey a

meaning synonymous with grumbling. "Pash," *i.e.*, ahead, sometimes joined with it as a Pashead. "Ravin," *i.e.*, to devour voraciously (from whence comes ravenous?). "Loggats," ("Hamlet," Act v., scene 1) "Did these bones cost no more the breeding, but to play at loggats with them?" evidently having reference to some game. They now signify in Warwickshire, the *log* or *clog* put round an animal's leg to prevent its running away. "Sagg," to sink down; thus a labourer will speak of a sagging job, *i.e.*, a tiresome one. "Shive," a slice; so we hear to cut a shive of anything. "Sperr," to stir. "Deck," *i.e.*, a pack; a deck of cards is common enough. There is a very marked expression known in all the county around Stratford, and used whenever there has been any unusual disturbance or ado, and which is invariably characterised by the phrase, "There has been old work to-day." It explains the porter's allusion in "Macbeth" (Act ii., scene 3), "if a man were porter of hell gate, he should have old turning the key;" which is explained in the notes as frequent. So also in Ursula's speech in "Much Ado About Nothing," Act v. scene 2—"Madam, you must come to your



ANCIENT OAK
Drillfield Road
From
Hampton Sney

uncle, yonder's old coil at home": coil, in the sense of stir, bustle. There is the remarkable word "mammet," which Shakespeare uses, as was common in his day, for a puppet. It is now used by the crow-boys to signify the scarecrow they dress up to frighten the birds. Then there is the well-known expression of being in a person's book, so common in Warwickshire. This must not be confounded with a much later phrase, of being in a person's good books, and which is comparatively very recent. The folk use it without the qualifying epithet. Thus, in the "Taming of the Shrew" (Act ii., scene 1), in the bantering between Kate and her lover, Petruchio says, jest-

1586, was that he had no goods on which distraint could be levied; and in the month of March, 1587, we are told of his producing a writ of *habeas corpus*—a sufficient proof, it is held, that he was at the time suffering imprisonment for debt. We meet his name again, in a curious document of the date of 25th September, 1592. On that day Sir Thomas Lucy, and other commissioners, who had been appointed to inquire and report respecting "such recusants as have been heretofore presented for not coming monthly to the church," signed a return in which the names of various "recusants" are given, and among them those of "Mister John Shackespeare," and of eight others, with this comment



Associated traditionally with Shakespeare.

ingly, to her observation that he has no arms, "A herald, Kate! Oh, put me in thy books." So, also, in "Much Ado About Nothing," (Act i., scene 1), the messenger says to Beatrice—"I see the gentleman is not in your good books." To which she replies, "No, an he were, I would burn my library." This would seem to be the same phrase which has come down to us unalloyed. The old Harvest Home song, "I mun be married a Sunday," with the burden of which Petruchio banters Kate, is sung now as of old in Warwickshire—"Taming of the Shrew" (Act ii., scene 1).

John Shakespeare, it would seem, did not escape those personal penalties which usually attach to troubled fortunes. A writ of distraint was issued against him, and the return made to it, on the 19th of January,

—"It is said that these last nine come not to church for fear of process for debt." These accumulated embarrassments ended in the cessation of John Shakespeare's connexion with the corporation of Stratford. He first began to absent himself from their meetings at the commencement of the year 1577, and he only rarely attended them after that period. On the 31st of August, 1586, he was deprived of his alderman's gown, on the ground that "he doth not come to the halls when they be warned, nor hath not done of long time." It is scarcely credible that none of the many biographers who have fastened on his aldermanic robe-stripping have explained the fact that nine other of John Shakespeare's associate civic dignitaries were at the same moment in a like state,

recently issued from Her Majesty's College of Heralds by Pursuivant of Arms:—

I have referred to the original papers relating to the Shakespeare Grant of Arms, and there can be no doubt that a Patent was assigned to John Shakespeare, the father of the Poet, in 1596, and that it was ratified in the subsequent assignment for Arden.

There is also ample proof that the grantee established the fact that he was of sufficient social position to warrant the issue of a patent.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

CHARLES H. ATHILL, Bluemantle
Pursuivant of Arms.

Heralds College, April 30, 1889.

This authoritative statement is a crushing blow to the Baconian slanderers, not only in reference to this special charge made by Donnelly, but to the matter of the pretended cypher and all the theory of his nonsensical book. The systematic blackening of Shakespeare's character, the sneers at his parentage, the charges of immorality, the deer-stealing story, the denial of his classical education, the minimising of his abilities, the charges in reference to his marriage, all come to nothing now that we know that the Heralds College, at his request, and in spite of all that his enemies could say, and after a due investigation into the circumstances of the family, did grant his father the arms asked for. The whole theory which required Shakespeare's degradation for Bacon's elevation is simply incredulous nonsense.

We are enabled to give *fac-simile* copies of the original grants of arms, both Arden and Shakespeare: highly interesting they must ever be.

The poet's mother being a member of the great and famous family of the Ardens, such fact is set forth in the grant, as well as the claim of the Shakespeares to have been rewarded by Henry VII. Heraldry was perhaps in greater esteem in the Tudor period than it is now, but there was no absolute barrier that prevented a member of one class from merging into one socially higher. "Whosoever studieth the laws of the realm," says a writer of that very time, "whoso abideth in the university, giving his mind to his book, or professeth physic and the liberal sciences, or beside his service in the room of a captain in the wars, or good counsel given at home whereby his commonwealth is benefited, can live without manual labour, and thereto is able and will bear the port, charge, and countenance of a gentleman, he shall for money have a coat and arms bestowed upon him by heralds (who in the charter of the

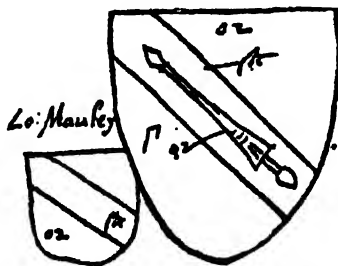
same do of custom pretend antiquity and service and many gay things), and thereunto being made so cheap, be called Master, which is the title that men give to esquires and gentlemen, and reputed for a gentleman ever after." This clearly was the mode in which John Shakespeare, yeoman, became changed into that worshipful gentleman, Master John Shakespeare. It is to be remarked that the grant of arms by Dethick, Clarenceux Herald, was criticised by a rival, Brooke, York Herald, not on the ground that John Shakespeare was not entitled to a grant, but that the arms assigned bore too close a resemblance to those of Lord Manley. We may be sure that if censorious Ralph Brooke could have proved the impropriety of the grant, he would have done so.

There are but few further facts of any moment to record with respect to this couple, except that John Shakespeare was buried in Stratford on the 8th of September, 1601, and that the remains of his wife were laid, as we may assume, by his side, on the 9th of September, 1608. Doubtless with the more than willing help of their illustrious son, they were enabled to pass tranquilly the later evening of their days. A great deal of needless trouble has been taken with the view to show

Shakespeare

see 3 books of differ. 61

*See Rygh of E. 1. 62
2: 28. Book of diff*



Facsimile of original sketch in trick of John Shakespeare's Arms.

that neither of them could write. A number of documents are still extant which John Shakespeare signed with his mark, and in the only instance in which we meet with the signature of his

wife, it is made in the same form. This was, however, no unusual circumstance among

people of their position in the days of Queen Elizabeth. Caligraphy even of a rude kind was then an accomplishment slow in its process of execution, especially for thirteen aldermen, "all of a row." Out of nineteen aldermen and burgesses of Stratford who signed a deed in the year 1565, not less than thirteen — among whom were the bailiff, the chief alderman, and John Shakespeare — failed to attach their names to it in their own handwriting. It was the rule for attorneys drawing deeds to write the names of intended signators, and for these to set their marks or seals against such. For one case to the contrary, ten bear only the signators' "mark." This practice of writing the names of signators and witnesses was perpetuated down to the last century. It was a rule rather than an exception, and even in our present time attorneys continue the habit by pencilling the names, and tracing the same over with pen and ink as due execution of the document.

Are there none of the true Shakespeare lineage yet existing? In connection with this an anecdote by William Howitt should be mentioned. He says, "As I was walking through Stratford one morning, I saw the master of the village school mustering his scholars to their tasks. I stopped, being pleased with the old man, and said, 'You seem to have a considerable number of boys here; shall you raise another Shakespeare from among them, think you?' 'Why,' replied the master, 'I have a Shakespeare now in the school!' I knew that Shakespeare had no descendants beyond the third generation, and I was not aware that there were any of his family remaining. But it seems that the posterity of his sister, Joan Hart, who is mentioned in his will, still exist



Old House
Sheep St



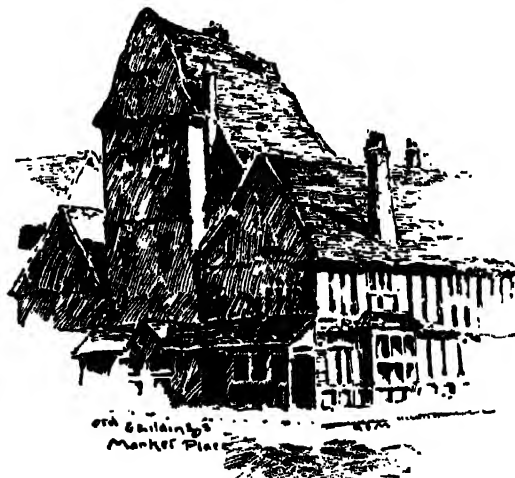
under the name of Hart at Tewkesbury, and a family in Stratford of the name of Smith. 'I have a Shakespeare here,' said the master, with evident pride and pleasure. 'Here, boys, here.' He quickly mustered his laddish troop in a row and said to me, 'There now, sir, can you tell which is a Shakespeare?' I glanced my eye along the line, and instantly fixing it on one boy, said 'That is the Shakespeare!' 'You are right!' said the master, 'that is Shakespeare; the Shakespeare cast of countenance is there. That is William Shakespeare Smith, a lineal descendant of the poet's sister." Howitt adds, "It sounded strangely enough as I passed along the street in the evening, to hear some of the boys say one to another, 'That's the gentleman who gave Bill Shakespeare a shilling.'"

There have been discussions at various times, respecting any lineal descendants of Shakespeare, and without any very conclusive issue. It is known that the line of Shakespeare's own body terminated in his granddaughter, Lady Barnard, of Abingdon, near Northampton; but Shakespeare had a sister, Joan, who married William Hart, of Stratford, and this branch, partly under the name of Hart and partly under that of Smith, may be regarded as the last remains of his family. In 1817, while passing through

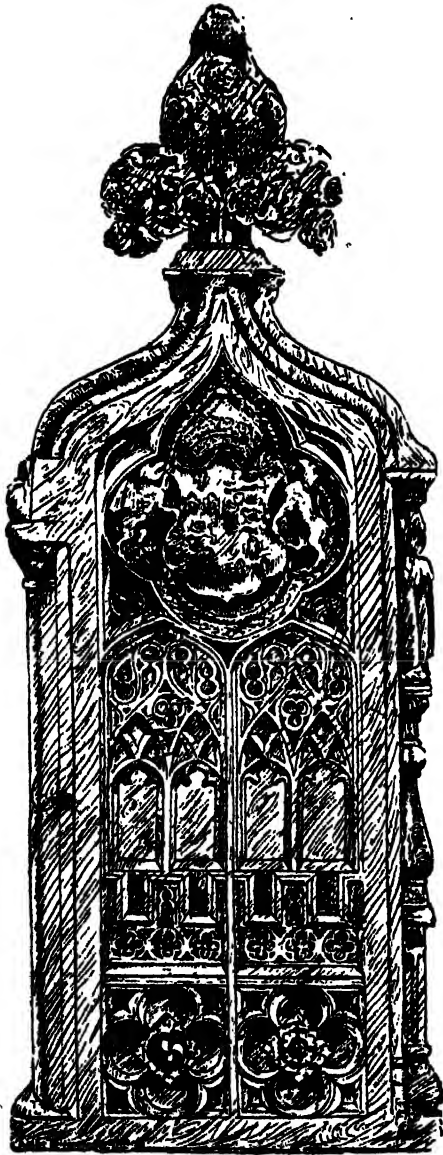
Tewkesbury, the editor of the *Monthly Magazine* was led by the reputed inscription on a tombstone of a John Harte, buried there in 1800, which described him as a sixth descendant of the poet Shakespeare, to inquire whether there lived in that town any survivors of the family. After much search, he discovered a son of this Harte, who had been christened by the name of William Shakespeare, who was a journeyman chairmaker. The contour of his countenance closely resembled the portrait in the first folio edition, a circumstance sufficient in itself to excite an interest in his favour.

Harte's father asserted that he held the property in Shakespeare's two houses in Stratford, but they had long been under mortgage, and his mother sold them by auction, deriving a balance, after paying the mortgage and expenses, of only £30. The family pedigree he had preserved, but had no other relic of the great poet, save a long walking stick, which had been given to him by his father, as one which had belonged to Shakespeare. In answer to inquiries, he said his father and grandfather often talked on the subject and buoyed themselves up in the hopes that the family might some day be remembered; but, for his part, the name had hitherto proved of no other use to him than as furnishing jokes among his companions, by whom he was often annoyed on this account.

May we not reasonably look to the known and admitted general depression of trade, which then, as now, seemed to appear at cycles throughout the country, and which affected the town of Stratford, as having told on John Shakespeare's circumstances,



especially at the time of young Shakespeare starting out on the race of hoped-for independence? That depression did exist is



OLD ORIGINAL CHANCEL STALL END—TIME HENRY VIII.—SNITTERFIELD.

The other Stall Ends were executed from this by Robert Bridgeman, of Lichfield.

established by the petition which the bailiffs and burgesses of Stratford addressed to the Lord Burghley in 1590. The town had fallen "into much decay for want of such trade as

heretofore they had by clothing and making of yarn, employing and maintaining a number of poor people by the same, which now live in great penury and misery, by reason they are not set to work as before they have been." Special mention is also made of the decline of the wool trade, otherwise so flourishing here, and as John Shakespeare is admitted to have been a dealer in wools, there is an obvious connection between the decline in his personal worldly circumstances and the state of trade in the town itself.

All writers on Shakespeare quote Stevens's—one of the earlier editors (1773)—well-known sentence, "All that is known with any degree of certainty of Shakespeare is that he was born at Stratford-upon-Avon—married, and had children there—went to London, where he commenced acting, and wrote poems and plays, returned to Stratford, made his will, died, and was buried." This succinct enough biography, at the time it was penned, was all that he knew of his author, possibly all that he cared to know, as editor of his plays, and was no very great exaggeration. After a century and a half from his death, we seem to know less of his personal history, almost, than is now known of Homer, after the lapse of nearly thirty centuries. But the steadily growing fame of our great dramatist awakened at last the most intense curiosity to know something more of his life—to gather from the "ruins of time" some precious relics of that once noble edifice. The zeal and critical acumen displayed in this investigation have never been surpassed in any literary undertaking. Many important facts relative to Shakespeare's life have been ascertained since the time of Stevens; mingled with these are many utterly unfounded and ridiculous statements repeated by writers who dishonour themselves by giving them currency. The facts thus brought to light have been gathered from legal documents of various kinds, registers of births, deaths, and baptisms, wills, deeds, mortgages, and the like. From such sources, vague statements that before rested on mere tradition have been in some cases disproved, in others defined and established, while many facts entirely new have been rescued from oblivion. In this way a somewhat connected series of facts has been made out, constituting a pretty fair skeleton for a biography, but it is little more than a skeleton. The filling up—the flesh and fullness—has been in this wise. Where

ever, in the whole range of contemporaneous literature, a passage has been found describing the private life and manners of any individual similarly situated, it has been eagerly seized as showing at least one of the possible ways in which Shakespeare may have spent his time. The straggling rays of light thus thrown upon certain passages in his life are, furthermore, in some instances, brought to a focus by the dexterous juxtaposition of some one of his sonnets that happens to be of an autobiographical character, and that lets us into the very interior workings of the man's hidden life. Shakespeare's history has on the one hand ceased to be a



collection of contradictory and absurd traditional inventions, and has, *per contra*, become something more than a mere tissue of dates and legal entries. He has become, to some considerable extent, personally known. The world is satisfied that, personally, Shakespeare was of a free, social nature. According to the testimony of Ben Jonson—and who would not add rather than detract from it?—he “had many ‘wit-combats’ at the Mermaid Tavern; he had an excellent phantasy, brave notions, and gentle expressions, wherein he flowed with that facility that sometimes it was necessary that he should be stopped.” Blessings on these words, almost the only reliable biographical sentences bequeathed of the greatest of the world. The words reveal whole volumes respecting his peculiar literary character, which consisted in this: that no other man had such transcendent power of expressing what he saw and felt and thought. No other man has uttered as he has done on

all subjects universally. From the “grey-coated gnat,” and the jewelled ring on an alderman’s finger, to the highest human thought and human deed, there is nothing which has not been transfigured and glorified by the vigour and wealth of his imagination and the unparalleled luxuriance of his diction. His was indeed a full healthy mind, a brain exhaling thoughts and images, and seeking vent in the club-room as well as in the drama. There was no taint of hypochondria in him. He kept his health by not too anxiously caring for it, and was the last man to undermine his constitution by persistently feeling his pulse and looking at his tongue in the mirror.

It matters naught whether the blood of beggars or of Kaisers ran in his veins; for genius is not confined to any class, any more than virtue is to a sect or a party. Shakespeare himself has beautifully taught us this great truth in the speech which he has put into the mouth of the King of France, when Bertram, the young and vain Count of Rousillon, rejects the fair and virtuous Helena, on the trumpery plea that she is “a poor physician’s daughter”:—

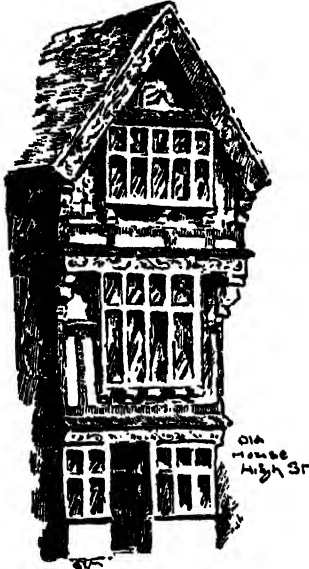
The King’s reply is probably the real utterance of the poet’s heart—

“’Tis only title thou disdain’st in her, the which I can build up. Strange is it, that our bloods Of colour, weight, and heat, pour’d all together, Would quite confound distinction, yet stand off In differences so mighty.”

It is admitted that the “*Tempest*” was one of Shakespeare’s latest plays—and some think it was the very last. It was written at Stratford, under home influences, and its author was enriched by the affection of his daughters. There are incidents in the play which correspond with such a condition. Just as Shakespeare presents himself twenty years previously as *Touchstone* (the unwilling husband) so he reappears in *Prospero*, the kind and careful father. See the different estimate placed upon female virtue as compared with some of the earlier dramas. See how domestic he has become. He is a father protecting a daughter, not with windy speeches like Polonius, but with earnest and penetrating warnings to her lover. The sustaining powers of a daughter’s affection is also manifest, for when *Miranda*

(while referring to former misfortune) exclaims, "Alack, what trouble was I then to you," the reply is:—

"O a cherubim
Thou wast, that did preserve me,
Thou did'st amile
With a fortitude from heaven."



The author's contemplated farewell to his life's work is also suggested by Prospero's exclamation—

"This rough magic
Here abjure. I'll break my staff,
And deeper than did ever plummet sound
I'll drown my book."

Then, like one who had felt deeply the changes of life, he gives that oft-quoted picture of mutability:—

"The cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
Yea, all which it inherit shall dissolve,
And like this insubstantial pageant faded
Leave not a rack behind. We are such
stuff
As dreams are made of, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep."

The solemn consciousness of approaching death is also suggested by *Prospero's* purpose at the close of the play:—

"And thence retire me to my Milan, where
Every third thought shall be my grave."

This allusion to the speedy end was realized, since Shakespeare did not long survive the "Tempest." The epilogue to the latter, it is urged, shows that his conscience was reproaching him for past sins (well for us

all if we endure these qualms), and it closes with the great author's marvellous words declaratory of the power of Prayer:—

"And my ending is despair,
Unless I be relieved by prayer,
Which pierces so, that it assaults
Mercy itself, and frees all faults."

Some say that Shakespeare displayed extraordinary indifference to literary fame, by neglecting to supervise the publication of his dramas. But that opinion, taken literally, cannot be said to rest upon any sufficient foundation. Shakespeare, in this respect, only conformed to the almost universal practice of his age. The works of popular dramatists were then written solely that they might be acted, and never, apparently, with a view to their being read. They were sold to theatrical companies, whose interest it was to keep them unpublished as long as they continued to attract large audiences. The authors themselves seemed to have readily acquiesced in this arrangement. They did not desire to obtain notoriety by committing their works to the press, either because they conceived that a sort of discredit attached to any professional connection with the stage, or because they felt that a drama would lose its main effect by being deprived of the



accompaniments of theatrical representation. When they did publish their works, they appear to have published them for the pur-

pose of anticipating the issue of mutilated and piratical copies, or for the purpose of doing justice to their own reputations, after such copies had actually been printed. We should bear in mind that the great poet lived in a busy and uncritical age. Civil convulsions, and the ascendancy of the Puritanical spirit during the large portion of the two or three generations which immediately followed, left but little time or inclination to collect the right threads of literary biography, and above all, of the biography of a writer for the stage. The limitation of his family to the female line, and its early extinction, prevented the existence of any certain centre round which the traditions of his life might have gathered. Fire, the most destructive of natural agencies, too, contributed to throw

sonal identity can only be ascribed to the fact that the merging twilight of his fame did not dawn upon the world until he had lain in the grave a full century. In this long interval all the letters he wrote and received doubtless shared the fate of Cæsar's clay.

The world is accustomed to express great astonishment that no manuscripts of Shakespeare have come down to us. But of how many other great men may not the same be said? The solemn dearth of the details so universally sighed for, in the case of such heaven-born stars as Shakespeare and Homer, possibly enhances the reputation accorded by the world, to such exceptional mortality. It may be well that he left no handwriting in familiar lines, no unravelled threads of his common human nature, which critics



into deeper shadow this wonderful figure; and who shall say what memorials of Shakespeare may have been lost through the destruction of Ben Jonson's house some seven or eight years later than the burning of the Globe Theatre, and of a large portion of the City of London itself in 1666? We must remember there were no very marked incidents in the poet's career or unduly imposing personality in the poet himself. It was pre-ordained that his written works should stand alone. We have so many asserted petty details of his history that we should have heard something of its greater events, if there had been in it any great events to be made known. Not half as many footprints of his personality can be found as his father made at Stratford. This seeming mystery can have but one reasonable explanation. The obscurity enveloping his per-

might follow up into the inner recesses of his daily life, and fleck the disc of his fair fame with the specks and motes they found in their search after moral delinquencies. It is a wonder that one of such genius could have died only some two and a half centuries since, and have left a character so completely barred in against the idly curious. A soft, still blue of a hundred years' deep, surrounds his personal being. Through this mild cerulean haze it shows itself fair and round. Well is it for him, perhaps, that we of to-day cannot get nearer to him than the gentle horizon of these intervening centuries. It is a seamless mantle that Providence has wrapt around the statue of his life, in which no envious Casca can ever make a rent to get at the frailties or small actions of a great master.

Fire was the great destroyer in those times. Many, if not all, the manuscripts of



his plays would most probably perish in the fire which consumed the Globe Theatre in 1613, and he was thus lightened of carrying to his Stratford repose-seeking retreat, any heaps of writings, all of which had been cleanly licked up by the devouring element. His retirement to Stratford was the day of extreme Puritanism. Its spirit, intolerant of the playhouse and of all its works, must have been gaining strength at the time of his death. Therefore, the strange and seeming unaccountable disappearance of whatever playhouse papers he may have left behind him at Stratford should not be far to seek. May not some members of his own family have been aids in the destruction of that, which in mixing among neighbours and friends, they would hear designated as the instigations of the Evil One? His daughter Judith, aged 32 at the time of his death, survived him forty-six years, and the whisper of tradition says she was more than a Puritan. Plays and play-actors were an abhorrence to her, and there exists tradition traceable through more than two centuries that the world is indebted to her for the clean sweep of letters and papers evidenced to have been made at New Place at the time of her father's death. We know what intolerance religious fanaticism begets, and how little it hesitates at to further its ends. Without any wish to libel his loved daughter, the world may possibly be indebted to her for destructive achievements mankind will for ever lament. Few realise that the Great Fire in London in 1666, which, in consuming St. Paul's Cathedral, burned up an immense quantity of books and manuscripts that had been brought from all the threatened parts of the city, and heaped

beneath the arches of its crypts for safety, was probably the final and effectual holocaust of almost every piece of print or writing that might have served to illuminate the history of Shakespeare. It was a direly lamentable lessening of the even then scanty memorials of the great master's life work. A large portion of the third folio edition, which had appeared only shortly before, is known to have fallen a prey to the flames on this calamitous occasion, and thus caused this third edition to be even scarcer than the first.

We must also remember that he lived before biography could be said to have been known, when men who were great in literature were lost in the general *mêlée* of the warfare and action of their times, or who cultivated a majestic solitude, living "collaterally or aside" to the world and their own age. The four greatest of all poets — Homer, Dante, Shakespeare, and Milton—are those precisely of whom least can be told us, and the incidents of whose private history are in a peculiar degree at once scanty and uncertain. Homer is little more than a voice, lonely and melancholy, rhapsodizing on the Chian strand. Dante stands forth more clearly from the clouds of the past, but he, too, is surrounded by darkness, and his personality is that of a shade, munificent and modest. There should be no



disappointment in reference to the little that centuries of inquiry have been able to collect about the life of the "myriad-minded";

for what proportion could be expected between *one* short life and myriad minds? The one, however interesting, could be no measure to, not exponent of, the multiplicity of the other. Emerson has summed all up in his exclamation applied to the great author, "*Genius draws up the ladder after him, when the creative age goes up to heaven, and gives way to a new creation, which sees the works, and asks in vain for a history.*" Sir Thomas Bodley, who began to form the great collection of books which still bears his name, towards the close of the sixteenth century, calls plays "*riffe raffes,*" and declares "*they shall never come into my library.*" It is a striking proof of the change of tastes and customs that some of the most costly volumes in the great

name into dark or doubtful eclipse. For a period of one hundred years, his works were not much read; and throughout a portion of that time, and even down to a much later date, several of his latest dramas only held possession of the stage in the corrupted versions of feeble or irreverent hands. It was not until about the middle of the last century that the national admiration of the great poet, in any large sense of the word, began to arise. Enthusiasm was soon stimulated by the teachings and the example of the critics and scholars of Germany. It has continued steadily growing to an universal admission that the genius, the wisdom, the talents, and productions of Shakespeare have never been equalled by any man not divinely inspired.

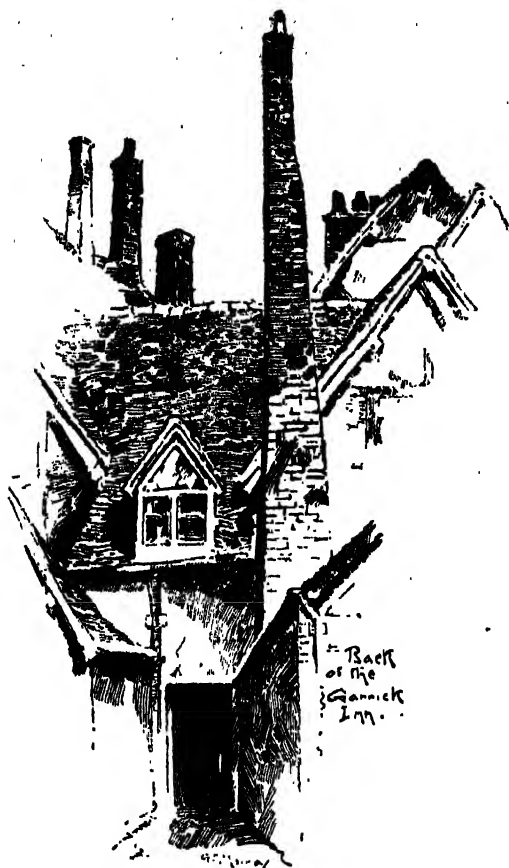


OLD BUILDINGS IN THE ROTHER STREET, TIME OF SHAKESPEARE.

Bodleian Library of the present day are the very works, as published in his own time, which its founder treated with such special contempt.

There is one division, at least, of Shakespearean literature through which runs a broad track of light. The dramas themselves form a subject of study which admits of no other controversies than those to which the diversities of our own tastes and capacities may give rise. He who reads these aright shall have vanquished the conqueror of kings. Shakespeare's fame, however, even in England, has not been by any means of a uniform and steady growth. His genius was but partially recognised by his contemporaries, and among the two or three generations which followed, we find that the spread of the Puritanical spirit, the agitations of the great Civil War, and, finally, the ascendancy of frivolous foreign tastes in the days of the Stuart Restoration, continued to throw his

They will live as long as great thoughts, the grandest language, and cardinal principles shall find a dwelling-place in the admiration of mankind. He opened the great gold and silver mines of ideas, and brought out their priceless treasures, and coined them into a literary currency for all coming ages. Shakespeare's banner waves on high above all his compeers, while around his standard he rallies all the champions in the field of intellect and mental progress. Lessing was, perhaps, the first man that formed and proclaimed what the most competent judges would now regard as an adequate conception of the profound truth and the astonishing range of Shakespeare's genius; and almost all the most eminent literary men of his country have since zealously continued the work which he began. With that of Germany, a corresponding school of Shakespearean critics soon appeared in England; but, as a nation, we have never fully shared the intoxication



less demonstrative form of our admiration arises mainly, no doubt, from our more sober and more reserved temperament; but it is also, perhaps, in some measure to be traced to the specially practical and laborious nature of the task which we have had to perform. Shakespearean criticism among us fell almost exclusively into the hands of editors, commentators, and antiquaries. All the obscure literature of a whole age had to be explored for the purpose of fixing the poet's text, explaining his allusions, and ascertaining the sources from which he derived his stories. The German mind, in its study of Shakespeare, had no such preliminary labour to encounter; and, freed from this restraining influence, it rushed, with its accustomed enthusiasm, into that region of boundless speculation to which it seemed to have been, from its very position, immediately invited. We are, however, becoming awakened to the greatness of our master spirit. For one devotee at the shrine existing fifty years since, there are now five hundred! "Vires acquirit eundo!" Who shall number them centuries hence?

of the German idolatry of our own great dramatist. Our American kinsmen, to their honour be it said, have, with their naturally keener discernment, gone "ahead" of us in all that relates to the great poet of the world. They have favoured us with a Julia Bacon, who after propounding her insane theory that Lord Bacon was the writer of Shakespeare's plays, ended her career by departing out of life in a lunatic asylum. Romeo Donnelly, not less fanatical, we will hope may be spared the fate of Juliet, his beloved one. The





Mary Arden's
Cottage
at Wilmcote



MARY ARDEN AND WILMCOTE.



THE birthplace and home of Mary Arden, Shakespeare's mother, Wilmcote possesses a charm hardly second to that of Shottery, the home of his early love and wife Anne Hathaway. Wilmcote is one of those delightful War-

wickshire villages, dignified in their simplicity, of which the people of the noble old county with good reason pride themselves, as being "thoroughly English," and certainly its position in a finely timbered district, united to attractions through associateship with the mother of the best-loved poet of the English race, entitles it to rank second to none in charms, flowing from identity with him possessed of the most varied knowledge of human life in all its tortuous windings. Hitherto Wilmcote has been passed by and neglected of the many of the class "doing the Shakespeare country," although there have not been wanting devoted students who have been led to seek out this, the home of his mother, and which may fairly be termed one of the most unique and poetic old homesteads possessed of Great Britain.

Mary Arden's home is one of a class of old thatched-roof residences peculiar to Warwickshire, Worcestershire, Gloucestershire, and Somersetshire, and which, through stress of time, is rapidly dwindling away, and must ere long become only of the past and remembered of memorials alone. On first examination, it is difficult to realize their great age, though the initiated find the fact beyond any question. In Worcestershire,

old long-drawn-out tenements of the class identical with the "Anne Hathaway" at Shottery and "Mary Arden" home at Wilmcote, may be found, and in much better condition. It is undisputable that thatching in the highly perfected manner shown by the roofs of old rural houses of the period is a lost art, and not likely to be recovered. Men are to be found who can thatch a hay or wheat stack, but try any of these at the old fifteenth century style of work and they are nowhere. The quantity of straw consumed in the covering-in of such roofs was enormous, and

of dimensions larger than could be included in the span of two trees joined at the apex. These cottages abound in the better-cared-for villages in the counties named; the age of many is clearly of Henry VII. period, and their now existent comparatively sound condition is conclusive proof of the Arden and Hathaway homesteads being, so far as age is concerned, all they are represented. The thatch on this class of houses was estimated to serve its purpose for sixty years, this without much repair, owing to the great thickness of straw used; after that, repairs would be



now proves utterly preventive in these times, when straw has increased to a value equal to the grain it bears. Such residences as those of Mary Arden and Anne Hathaway, even in the period of their erection, were exceptional, and were built by the owners of the estates on which situate, as residences for families of acknowledged position as landowners. The smaller cottages of the period will be found to possess the distinct peculiarity, the result of legal enforcement of the time of Henry VII., when, without special permission, it was ordered that no house should be erected

needed to prolong efficiency, and it is well known that one thatching followed by periods of repair has oftentimes sufficed for eighty and more years.

Mary Arden, Shakespeare's mother, has hitherto received but little thought from biographers; although from the various scraps that have come down to us regarding her, it is quite clear that by her natural gifts and character, as well as by her business turn of mind, she eminently deserved and justified the confidence placed in her by a fond father, who laid upon her great responsibilities. Her father's preference for her was very likely in some degree owing to her stated remarkable cheerfulness, and which brightened many a weary hour during a long illness, and dispelled many of the gloomy thoughts that affected him in the later part of his life. There were but few books available in those days to relieve the tedium of long winter nights. He calls himself in his will "sick in body." The German biographer, Carl

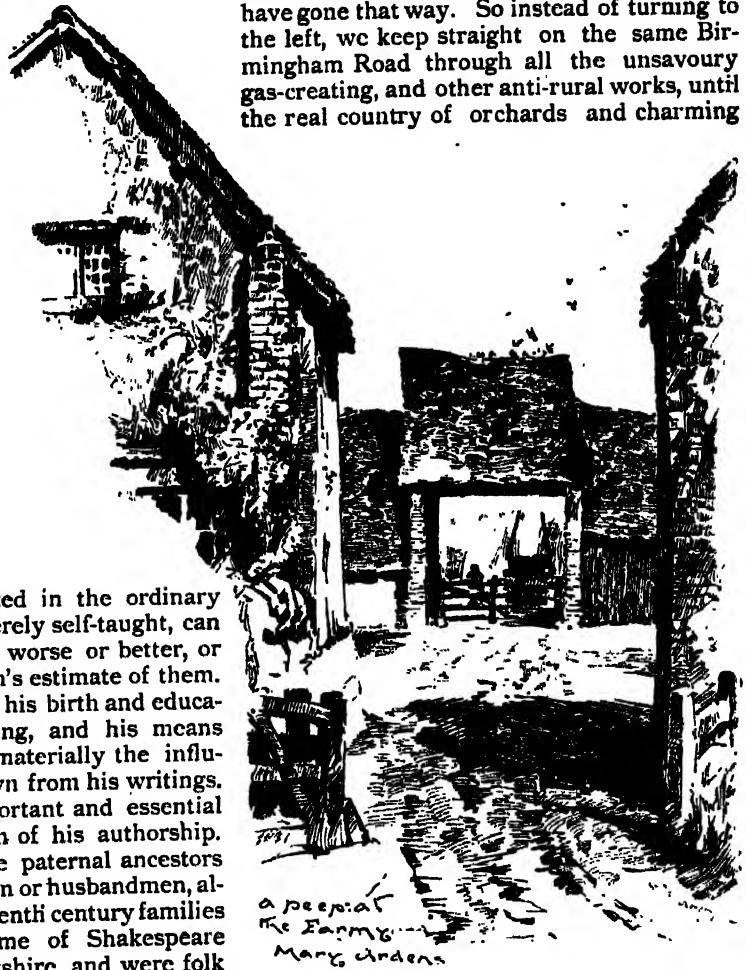
Else, says that by the brightness of her spirit, as well as by the practical uprightness of her character, which enabled her to transact business matters without discord and friction, she resembled Goethe's mother. May not her son have inherited his joyous nature and his delight in poetic creations from her, as Goethe inherited his from his mother. If, as experience teaches in very numerous cases, illustrious men inherit a large portion of their mental and moral qualities from the maternal side, it is more than reasonable to draw such inference in the case of Shakespeare's mother.

If a truly great man or woman needs no exalted descent, how must it be with the greatest of the human race? Yet to the proper and intelligent comprehension of Shakespeare's authorship, it is necessary to know something of his original condition in life, whether he was of gentle blood, or base-born, as his libellers impudently and wickedly assert. Whether he was educated in the ordinary sense of that term, or merely self-taught, can never make his writings worse or better, or affect any sensible person's estimate of them. But the circumstances of his birth and education, his manner of living, and his means of knowledge, do affect materially the influences which may be drawn from his writings. They are, therefore, important and essential conditions in the problem of his authorship. Shakespeare's immediate paternal ancestors were plain, honest yeomen or husbandmen, although early as the fourteenth century families bearing the martial name of Shakespeare were settled in Warwickshire, and were folk of consideration.

Alec Nelson, in an excellent and unpretending little periodical, *The Chimes*, charmingly conducts a pilgrim to Mary's village home.

"The home of Shakespeare's mother, in which her infancy and girlhood were passed, is attainable by vehicular or pedestrian setting out from Stratford, as the centre best suited for gaining correct knowledge of the

Shakespeare country. There are more ways than one to Wilmcote. One is to make for the Birmingham Road, turn off to the left opposite Clopton Lane, and march by the side of the canal from the ugliest part of Stratford (if it be possible for anything ugly to exist in the spot so saturated of Shakespeare), to the prettiest part of Wilmcote. This walk, however, has a drawback in the knowledge that the canal was not created in his day, and that he never could have gone that way. So instead of turning to the left, we keep straight on the same Birmingham Road through all the unsavoury gas-creating, and other anti-rural works, until the real country of orchards and charming



meadows greets the view. If in leafy June, the hayfields soon disclose themselves, and the pilgrim enters on fields and pastures, with ditches of flowers such as England only knows, without any narrowing of the road, trees close in upon you from above and overarch the way, as a bird broods over her young. After a time, the path climbs up, and roses are growing between



Church
in
Wilmcote

you and the road below. To the east the red brown of the fields toils on and upwards against the sky. Here on the right is the turning to Snitterfield, where the Shakespeares lived, and a little later the wood that has been hanging yonder on the brow of a low hill draws something nearer the road.

It is well to look backwards and forwards now; and, indeed, often along this way. We are in the midst of a vast one-sided amphitheatre. The tiers of seats are two ranges of hills in the west. The farther

range is faint and melts into the sky, as clouds melt into the horizon. In the wood upon the eastern side there is a sudden break of green sward; the road slopes steadily down before us to the Dun Cow. Just beyond that humble hostelry is the mouth of the lane on the left leading to Wilmcote.

Once more the path lifts itself from the road on to a green bank, whose fellow rises on the right, shutting out for a while fields, woods, and a section of the sky itself. At the foot of this hill, by the Dun Cow, the necessity of looking back becomes absolute; then the road is seen to be a clean cut, whose crest is a sharply defined line against the faint blue of the hills far beyond. On a sudden, a solitary figure steps over the crest; thrown up against the sky, in that clear air, the figure seems to be marching straight out of heaven. Perhaps it may be a princess in the dress of fairy tales, upon whose footsteps charms, for good or ill, attend. Perhaps—and when the figure grows out of the skyline down the hill, to you waiting below, it is that of a careworn woman, with the marks of labour on her bronzed face and hands.

Another road to Snitterfield and the larger Warwick to the right; the passing of a farmer's cart, or gig or so, whose driver is, in some cases, so old that this might be his last outing; then a tumbledown barn on the left, a delta of green beyond it, and between the lane swinging round towards Wilmcote.

How sweet the lane is! It goes curving away to the south-west between rose hedges, and has, at times, not so much as a semblance of path. Here and there is a house covered with ivy, and if the day has crept on from early dawn and draws near eventide, the sunset light comes filtering to you through the hedges on your right with tinges of green from the leaves and of a new red from the roses. There is young life in plenty, as there should be, nearing his mother's home. White calves, with liquid eyes, stare stupidly at you through and over the hedgerows. A brown foal, all legs, scampers off like a translated rocking-horse towards a distant gap, fringed with hawkweed as to its lower border. By the wayside a red haired boy is climbing a tree, with no earthly object. For the last time the road rises; not in homage to Mary Arden and her home, but by reason of a railway bridge crossing the Great Western line, on the which Wilmcote is the penultima Thule for him whose ultima is Stratford. Dogged

steadfast folk ascend the white path from the station. Almost to a man, woman, and child, they turn rightwards and, taking no notice of the railway bridge, over the which we have toiled, cross another, very beautiful, that 'in its turn crossed our old-young friend, the canal. The canal, here, has the path we might have taken to our left, and on the other side reflects a mill that seems as much older than it as the earth and the sky are. A few yards more and you are by Mary Arden's house. But there is a more excellent way from Stratford to Wilmcote by the Evesham Road, half-way to Binton, which is half-way to Bidford, which is half-way to Evesham. All of which sounds like the genealogies in the Old Testament, but is only part of an itinerary. We must climb Borden Hill and drop down its western slope, then strike northwards across the fields towards Wilmcote until reaching two cottages standing by the roadside, with a large farmhouse lying somewhat farther inland. One of the cottages is that of the gamekeeper to the Marquis of Hertford, owner of the land hereabouts in Shakespeare's country. At the right time of the year the way is by corn and clover, passionately red, over the sweep of fields. The path grows faint, and has to be made out by aid of occasional cart-ruts and an instinctive passage from gate unto gate; but there is no chance of losing it. The birds seem to guide one, though I daresay that is all wrong. Nevertheless, somehow the quivering sweetness of the larks' songs are all roofing over the way we ought to take; the thrushes are busy in the hedge along which we must pass; the grey plover's lazy flap of wing points out the road. A little later the nightingales—there is a chorus of them in that slip of wood yonder—sing in the darkness, "This is the way to Mary Arden's."

Titania's bank lies to our right in this early part of the journey, and the humbler flowers, not allowed to grow there, accompany us. The hay is lying in the fields; the thistle-down puffs off in filmy gusts into the air; agrimony, convolvulus, the rest-harrow, are among the grass and in this green lane, not unmingled with mud; to our left the sedges are growing.

The grass lane leads to and through Drayton Farm, midway between the Bidford and Alcester roads. Alcester, in Midland nineteenth century dialect, is pronounced as if there were no *ce* in it, and the *a* was *aw*.

At Drayton there is a pond and a walnut

tree, and opinionated geese, and more opinionated turkeys, and a close-clipped red haystack, that seems never to be touched all the year round, and a dog that strives to strangle himself with his chain, and to choke himself with barking. And beyond Drayton are such elms—some, alas! felled, and marked, R. 23 and so forth—and a lazy cart, carrying home the late hay, with a wooden rake hung up by its teeth behind. Parting company with the slow-moving, heavily shaking mass of hay, a man and woman, with their child, pass away to the left. The child's face is the most sunburnt. Through the open gap left by a vanished gate placid cows are seen, and a farm beyond. Now we have rye and the musical barley instead of wheat; charlock, vetches, and forget-me-nots for bindweed and rest-harrow; and the only birds are starlings, in hundreds. Beyond the brown ploughed field, away on the uplands towards Redhill Wood, sheep, with dog attendant, are feeding. Here is a gate opening right on to the Alcester road, and on the other side of the road another and yet another "down right," as the stage folks say. By either of these you can go Wilmcotewards. The former is better, as it takes you farther from the farmhouse, over-prim, and too much like an artisan's dwelling in a Midland town, where there are co-operative stores. You will miss a wonderful rick or so, but you will go through swishing grasses of every form and



via Collage
near
Wilmcote

odour, over the bugloss and buff-breasts, and, may be, put up a covey of partridges, or send a brace of larks careering skywards in a burst of song.

Across this field to a red path, into which trees thrust out bulging roots; then west a little, and after, through a white gate, north again. One more field—rather heavy going, what with its upward slant and the fact that it is ploughed—and then out into a yellow and green lane. This is the lane leading to the fragment of heath upon whose farther side lies Wilmcote. Another gate, and a little climbing takes us to the low hedge that crosses it. Once on a time—not a year ago—there was a gap in this hedge, but now this is enviously barred, and another right of way is going the way of all rights of way. On the crest of the heath patch stands a lonely house, and if we turn our back upon this we

out of a white, thatched cottage to the left, thronged round by fruit trees. Even the ugly Midland town of red-brick buildings facing it, and thrusting itself upon a pained view a few paces farther on, cannot quite kill the exquisite and homely poetry of this advanced sentinel to Wilmcote. The temptation is strong to pass the red brick ugliness, and go, by a lazily curving road, past a cottage whose thatch nearly reaches the ground, towards the farm nestling away to the right. If you would see Wilmcote, the temptation must be resisted. Thither, the way is west and to the left again, under an avenue of elms huge of bole.

The avenue passes the house of the clergy-



can see the sunlight resting on the Gloucestershire hills. Tiny crane-bills and tinier milk-worts are struggling on the hard bosom of this more barren land, that stretches away to the south in a line broken by fields and meadows. Turning from it we pass by lane and through gate, under the shadow of oaks and cornel trees, towards the village. If nothing else told us that this was near, the print of horses-hoofs in the soil, and the meeting of the first human being encountered since we left the Bidford road, these would betray its presence.

There is a farm sunk away to the right below the wheatfield and the hayfield. But the first of Wilmcote is this sudden flashing

man, with the singularly appropriate name of Crucifix; passes the little church in the little churchyard, where a yew, a lime-tree, and a huge privet-tree—not hedge—are growing out of Wilmcote graves. In the churchyard this notice may be read of man, though it is, probably, meant the rather to be read of boy:—

"This is God's Acre, sacred to Him and to the departed whose bodies sleep here. Do not bring dogs in, or indulge in loud talk, or smoke, or tread on the graves, or touch the flowers or shrubs, or walk on the grass, except when visiting a grave. Remember, O man, that dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."

The blacksmith's lies a little back from the main lane of the village on the same side as the church, and two horses—sleepy, massive, long-tailed—are dozing in front of it. The baker's and post-office—they are one and the same—juts out upon the way, as becomes an establishment of such prominence. All the children of the village are looking in at its windows—at the ceiling where bacon and brushes hang side by side: at the canisters, the sweets, the candles; at the cakes and loaves, the skipping-ropes in the inner distance, the stockings dangling in symmetrical row from a primitive piece of cord; at the baker and post-master's stick depending from a handle of one of the drawers behind the counter. Behind them, in the gardens of the four cottages, crossed by wooden beams, on the other side of the road, velvety mulleins are growing, and an old man wearing a top hat, with his corduroy trousers tied round at the knees with string, is plucking off their dead leaves.

But a few paces onward, and the heart of Wilmcote is reached. That heart, as becomes a place so sweet and simple, is the most widely opened space in the village. Standing with your back to the Swan Inn for awhile, the way by which you have come lies to the right, and, passing you, goes curving off to the left. Across the open space in front, another road is seen. That is the very lane by which you would have entered Wilmcote on our former route. That lane leads to the canal bridge, the railway bridge, the Birmingham road, and Stratford. A little way along it on the left as we look with back to the Swan—is a substantial-looking low brown stone building. Now, it is two houses. Time was when it was only one.

Let us go down slowly and quietly and leaning against the wall opposite take our fill of looking at this building—at the gate beyond it leading into the yard, closed in by farm buildings and a great arch, under which a cart is uptilted—at the outhouse yet farther away from the village, with a huge crack seaming its tumble-down walls—at the flowers in the garden, the stonecrop on the garden wall. That is where Mary, the mother of Shakespeare, lived as a girl—that is where he came as a boy, to see his granddam and granddad; and if you turn for a moment, from looking at the house, you will see, over the wall against which you have been leaning, some trees, standing singly or in groups of three or four. They are the remnants of the forest of Arden.

The greatest men seem usually to have the shortest biographies. The fact is easily enough understood. Their work on earth was too heavy, and the time for its completion too limited, to admit of their engaging in the trifles rendered attractive in too many biographies. Is it not enough that he, greater than the greatest, has bequeathed to the world thoughts only? Homer is wholly a myth, a pale shadow in the dim distance; an heroic, disembodied voice. Of all the ancient philosophers, Plato's name is most familiar to us. It has become the nucleus of countless fables; yet all that we really know of Plato personally could be written on a sheet of foolscap. His eighty-one years of common life are swallowed up in the vastness of his intellectual life. Why should it be otherwise with England's mighty penman? Biography is only distilled and sublimated gossip, the

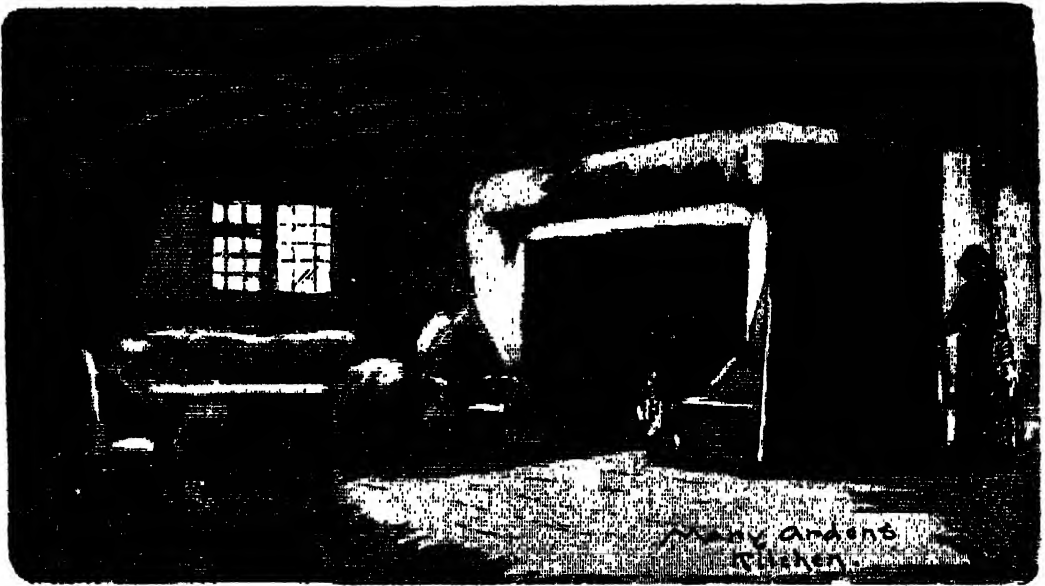


concentration of what this or that garrulous contemporary has said. Great men are apt to dwell apart from their peeping loquacious contemporaries, and thus cut off all possibility of successful cavedropping, even though a Boswell should creep and crawl to get near them. Nevertheless, they have a tenacious hold on universal curiosity merely as men. Societies and clubs are formed for no other purpose than to ransack old garrets and search mouldy chests for some biographical incident, some faint trace of their personality, and when the chronicles fail we try to read backwards their lives in their works. The tourist in foreign galleries of painting searches the faces of Raphael's Madonna in order to catch some glimpse of the Fornarina. The remotest allusions such

men make to themselves are seized upon, and their image fixed as the Lilliputians fastened Gulliver, pinning him to the earth by his own hair and beard. The well-authenticated facts of Shakespeare's outer life are few. They live on a little island on the bosom of a boundless sea, and each new adventurer must needs explore and know for himself how it is that a realm so small can be a source of such exhaustless wealth.

Through his mother, Shakespeare's lineage, if not of highest aristocratic order, had warrantable claims to a place in the best ranks of the English country gentry. The

was buried December 29th, 1580. She does not appear to have regarded her step-daughters with much affection, if we are to be guided in judgment by her subsequent total omission of them in her will. Mary Arden, whose very name breathes gentleness and poetry, however, seems to have been a favourite child of her father, in so far as we may judge from the circumstance that, along with her sister Alice, she was appointed sole executrix of his will, and received also the most valuable portion of the inheritance. The fortune which she thus brought to her husband con-



Ardens were descended from an ancient family, connected, as appears from the identity of coat-armour, with John Arden, esquire of the body to Henry VII.; and who, as appears from his will, dated in 1526, had been honoured with visits from his sovereign. Surely this settles the question of social position. Robert Arden, Shakespeare's maternal grandfather, was a "gentleman of worship," and the proprietor who lived in this very home, then the centre of the forest of Arden. He was twice married; but we have no account of his first wife, by whom he had a family of seven daughters; Mary, the wife of John Shakespeare, being the youngest. His second partner was Agnes Hill, a widow with a family, whose maiden name was Webbe, who was without issue, and who

sisted of the estate called Asbies, extending to fifty-four acres, together with the crops and certain pasture rights. The value of this portion would be not less than £224 of that time; which, according to our present standard, would value at nearly six times that amount. In addition there was a residence on the property, two tenants' houses, and gardens; also an interest in lands at Wilmcote and in two tenements at Snitterfield, and a sum of £6 13s. 4d., i.e., 20 nobles, in money before the division of the property. Such a dowry was, in the sixteenth century, no inconsiderable portion.

Mary Arden's father's will is, in several features, of deep interest. It was executed on 24th November, 1556, and gives much insight, not only into family affairs, but also into the life and circumstances of a class of

society of growing importance in those days. The introductory words to the will, where the testator commends his soul "to Almighty God and to the blessed Lady Saint Mary, and to all the holy company of heaven," although not warranting the drawing any positive conclusion as to the religion of the testator—for the will was drawn up in the reign of the Bloody Mary, when any such document must certainly have had a Catholic tone about it, even in the case of Protestants at that time—are almost precisely the same as the introductory words to the will of Henry VIII., who certainly did not die a Catholic.

soffer my daughter Ales quyetye to occupy halfe with her then I will that my wyfe shall have but iiijli. vjs. viijd. and her gintur in Snyterfylde.

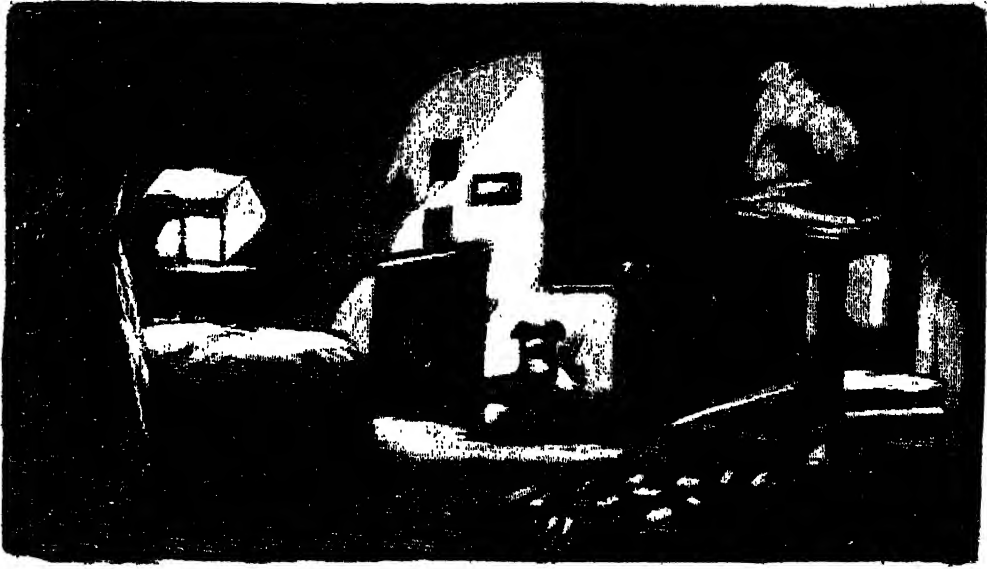
"Item, I will that the resedowe of all my goodes, movcable and unmoveable, my funeralles and my dettes dischargyde, I gyve and bequethe to my other children to be equaleye devidede amongste them by the descreshyon of Adam Pilmer, Hugh Porter of Snytherfyld, and John Skerlett, whom I do order to make my overseeres of this my last will and testament, and they to have for ther peynes takyng in this behalf xxs.



Now, our poet William Shakespeare's will opens in a very different form, and confirms beyond all possible doubt that he lived and died a Protestant. But even admitting that Mary Arden's father had professed the Roman Catholic faith, it would not by any means justify a conclusion that she herself was a Catholic. "To my daughter Ales," continues the testator, "I bequethe the thyrd part of all mye goodes, moveable and unmoveable in ffylde and towne, after my debtes and leggeses be performyed, besydes the goode she hathe of her owne all this time. Also I give and bequethe to Agnes my wyfe vijli. xiijs. iiijd., upon this condysione, that (she) shall sofer my daughter Ales quyetye to ynyoye halfe mye cople houlde in Wyllmote duryng the tyme of her wyddowehodde: and if she will nott

apese. Allso I orden and constytute my ffull excecutors Ales and Marye my dawgh-ters of this my last will and testament, and they to have no more for ther peynes takyng now as afore geven them. Allso I gyve and bequethe to every house that hath no team in the paryche of Aston to every house iiijd."

Mary's father must have died between the 24th November and 9th of December, 1556, proven by the date of the inventory of his property attached to the will. How changed are times, and how revolutionized the wants of the class such as this family belonged to since that period! What would a modern damsel think of a *trousseau* such a Mary Arden or Ann Hathaway set out with on their modest honeymoon? A couple of homely dresses with a barely enlarged assort-



ment of under garments, and half-a-dozen pairs of stockings, every article being of home make, constituted their entire wardrobe, and which must not be permitted of greater bulk than could be fastened on the horse's back which bore the bride and bridegroom "a pillion." There existed no mode of travel other than this horseback progress, which brought lovers and the newly married into close hugging position, unavoidable when jogging down hill. An almost primitive simplicity also marked household belongings in those days. Mary Arden, her sister and mother, had, at her father's death, to share among them a feathered bed, two mattresses, a coverlet, three bolsters, and one pillow, five board cloths, three towels, and like restricted number of other necessitous articles. There was not even a separate towel for every member of the family, and as to a wash-hand basin, it was a superfluity for which an ordinary bucket filled with water, cold and fresh from the garden well, did duty for the whole household. The kitchen contents tell of four pans, four pots, three candlesticks, a chafing-dish, evidently to warm, or rather somewhat dry, the beds in winter time, when the damp caused by the undrained condition of the country rendered such a necessity; a frying-pan, a gridiron, an axe, two hatchets, four casks, four pails, a baking trough, a hand saw, and a very few other articles made up the entire furnishing of the old home. The inventory of live stock consisted of eight

oxen, two bulls, seven cows and four calves, four horses and three foals, fifty-two sheep, nine pigs, and some bees and poultry. What a contrast do the furnishings of such a household present compared with our nowadays wants, which, to say the very least, have multiplied fifty-fold. With exception of the marriage bed, no others are mentioned, so that the daughters probably slept on sacks of straw or coarse mats, and what we could call an utter dearth of furniture prevailed. Not a word about body linen or dresses, or of vessels of any kind from which to eat or drink. How difficult it is to realize that the grandmother of the great master, and probably he himself, carved their food with instruments of rudest kind, and ate it from wooden trenchards by aid of wooden spoons and forks. Let it not be supposed that Robert Arden, whose home belongings appear to us to be miserably restricted, was other than of the upper middle class; they were amongst the leading families of the district, and it may be assumed theirs is a fair exhibit of such.

A curiosity is naturally felt to know something personally of Mary Arden, the mother of so transcendent a genius as Shakespeare; but here, as in most matters concerning him, we must be content with little of the class of information desired. Oldys, however, tells us that she was beautiful; and this we gladly believe. Ay, and more; she must have been a right womanly

woman to produce so gentle-souled a son, and one so keenly appreciating true female loveliness. The Ardens had been proprietors of land in Aston Cantlow for more than a hundred years, and in the churchyard of St. John the Baptist, at Aston, Mary Arden's father was buried in the latter end of 1556, as his will directed. At the altar of that church, in the following year, it is more than probable Mary Arden gave her heart and hand to Maister John Shakespeare, "for the mutual society, help and comfort, which the one ought to have of the other, both in prosperity and adversity." Let not the luxurious habits of the present age lead us to smile at such a fortune. All the worldly goods (except his lands) belonging to her father, were, in the inventory attached to his will, valued at seventy-seven pounds, eleven shillings, and tenpence; and these goods included numerous oxen, bullocks, kine, horses, sheep, besides wheat in the field and in the barn. Sir William Dugdale traces the Ardens back for some hundreds of years, up to the time of Edward the Confessor; and sometimes they had been high sheriffs of the county, and, like many other gentle folk of the time, sometimes they had been attainted for high treason.

The grandfather of Mary Arden, groom of the chamber of Henry VII., was nephew of Sir John Arden, squire of the body to the same sovereign. This same Sir John Arden was a son of Walter Arden and of Eleanor, the daughter of John Hampden, of Buckinghamshire. There were thus the ties of a common blood between William Shakespeare and one of the most distinguished men of the next generation—John Hampden, who was a student in the Inner Temple when the poet died. It is quite evident that, both by his father's side and by that of his mother, William Shakespeare was in earlier generations descended from that great and almost undefinable higher middle class, which in all ages has contributed so much to the wealth, intelligence, and virtue of England. The very name—Shakespeare—indicates plainly that he sprang from a race of warriors. We have this on the never-to-be gainsayed authority of Spenser, who alludes to this

fact in speaking of the bard. Who, then, shall question it?

"Whose muse full of high thoughts invention
Doth like himself heroically sound."

One of his ancestors, it is proved, fought on the field of Bosworth, where Richard III. lost his crown and his life, and where the



Mary Arden's
Parlor

Earl of Richmond carved with his sword his way to the throne of Henry VII. Truly, as the chroniclers inform us, the sturdy yeoman did *shake his spear* in that day to some good purpose, for he was rewarded for "valiant and faithful services with lands and tencements" in the shire of Warwick. William, the poet, was of the fourth generation in direct descent from this fortunate soldier of Bosworth, whose lineage quietly cultivated their estates, and belonged to the class of

thrifty gentlemen of whom the Earl of Warwick, in "Henry VI.," says to the King:—

"In Warwickshire I have true-hearted friends,
Not mutinous in peace, but bold in war."

The Ardens, as well as the Shakespeares, were devoted and attached to the House of Tudor; and the offices of groom of the chamber and squire of the body held by Robert and John were positive dignities, not merely honorary and titular, as at the present day, for it was the duty of the groom of the chamber to preserve and present to the squire of the body "all the King's stuff, as well his shoon as his other

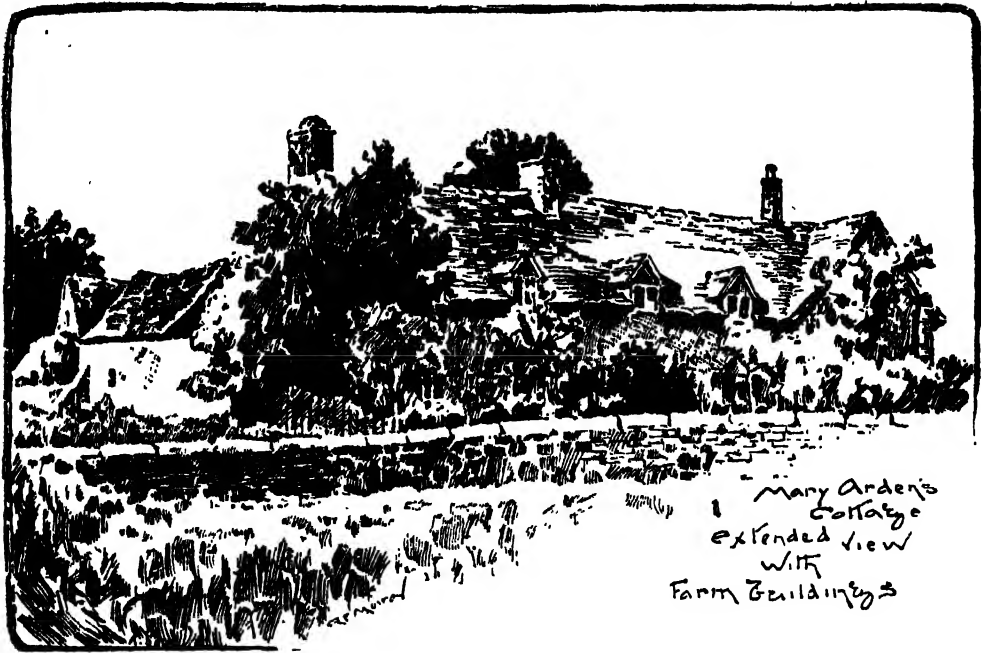
favourite daughter, Mary. After the death of her father, Mary lived almost alone in the old homestead, the long hours enlivened only by the society of a young yeoman, who had acquired the habit of often wandering over the old moors towards the peaceful hamlet of Wilmcote, a habit which strangely grew upon him, until the fair maiden consented to change her residence to Henley Street in Stratford-on-Avon. The young yeoman alluded to was no other than the John Shakespeare, who, a few years previously, had quitted the paternal home at Snitterfield and become a resident of Stratford, where during a course of twelve years and



Farm buildings
at Stratford
Mary Arden's
cottage

gear," and that it was the office of said squire to draw them on, he alone being permitted to "set hand on the King." Thus we can imagine that whilst an Arden was ministering to the personal comfort and elegance of his Majesty within the palace, a Shakespeare, as captain of the guard, was watching over his personal safety without; each magnifying his office, and little suspecting that from union of their blood, a century later, there would arise one for whose sake their names shall never be forgotten. Robert Arden, the King's Chamberlain, retired from Court on the death of Henry VII. His son, also called Robert, seems not to have sought public station, but lived and died on his estates in Warwickshire, bequeathing his property to his youngest and

afterwards he enjoyed all the municipal honours within the gift of his townsmen, from ale-taster and juryman of the court-leet to the dignities of alderman and high bailiff of the borough. His literary acquisitions were superior to those of his fellow officials, and although it has been a burning question among Shakespearean inventors of gossip whether he could write his name, there is little doubt that if he had been summoned before Jack Cade, in the famous sessions at Blackheath, his ignorance of the chirographic art would not have been sufficiently evident to save him from being hanged with "his pen and ink-horn about his neck." There is a most interesting document existing in shape of a corporation deed signed by nineteen members of the town council of Stratford, and it



would seem that if the question had been put to each of these aldermen and burgesses, "Dost thou use to write thy name, or hast thou a mark to thyself, like an honest, plain-dealing man?" only seven could have answered with the clerk of Chatham, "Sir, I thank God I have been so well brought up that I can write my name." John Shakespeare was one of these seven.

It was no discredit, however, to the wealth and gentility of a man in those days that he should be so deficient in education as not to be able to write his name. The mark after the signature was a seal or sign manual, a heraldic symbol of good birth, but no evidence of inability to write. The century that followed the Wars of the Roses was full of turmoil and civil strife and mob tyranny, so that ignorance was often the best safeguard, and a man felt a sense of security in not being able to read or write.

This matter of handwriting, or rather incapability of name signature, crops up continually in Shakespeare's biography, and through unchallenged repetition has become engrafted with the other silly statements in every biography prefacing his works. For the reason that Shakespeare's parents and others set each their particular mark to papers purporting to bear their signatures, we are told such makers of marks, men and women alike,

were so uneducated as to be incapable of writing. Nothing can be more untruthful than any such statement; and yet it has been repeated for centuries almost unchallenged. Almost the only exception is Shakespeare himself, who, it seems, possessed the qualification—a wonderful condescension on the part of Donnelly and his ilk. Shakespeare's daughter Judith is, however, placed in the list of non-scribables. It is not possible for any sane person to believe that Shakespeare, the greatest writer that the world has ever produced, or is likely to place on the stage of mankind, would bring up a child in such ignorance as to be incapable of signing her own name. We all know that, in preparing legal documents, the acting attorney usually pencils the names of the signatories. The doing this is a remains of more than custom. Formerly the signatures were written in full by the attorney, and the parties affixed their mark to their respective signatures in token of their confirmation of the act done on their behalf. Very many had special marks of their own, oftentimes grotesque in character, and by which they were known in their respective neighbourhoods. The writer has tested these facts in very many instances, and in numerous documents of the kind, even a century later than Shakespeare's day, there is absence of actual signature;



in many cases the name is found fully set out by the acting attorney and the assumed signator appends his mark. Shakespeare's father was continually engaged in auditing complicated accounts of the Corporation of Stratford, and received payment for this and similar labour from others. The assigning these men to the ranks of the utter ignorant on such grounds is as unjust as it doubtless was in the case of many of John Shakespeare's brother aldermen.

Charles Knight thus humorously discourses on the caligraphic performance of John Shakespeare and his brother aldermen in the execution of the deed in question. George Whetely, bailiff, makes an elaborate mark like a trivet with one leg hidden; and, with a dignity as great as that of a mailed king sealing with his thumb, he calls it his "sign manual": he was a woollen-draper, and five-and-twenty years afterwards he continues to make his sign manual, a little tremblingly perhaps, but still as emphatically as if his yard wand were a sceptre. "Roger Sadler, head alderman," baker, makes the good old cross, his own bun mark. "Wyllm Smythe," mercer, delights in a serpentine sign, waving like the ribbons upon a may-pole. "Lewes ap w" (Lewis ap Williams), ironmonger, has a most mystical mark, symbolical, perhaps, of spikes and bolts, but

otherwise unintelligible. "Adryan Quaynce," grocer; "Umfrey Plymley," mercer; "Wyllm Bott," of whose pursuit history makes no mention; "Rychrd Hylle," woollen-draper; and another "Wyllm Smythe," a shoemaker, delight not in these emblems; they write their names according to the penmanship of their age, but with the variety which belongs to individual character. "Rarff Cardre," we are sure, was a sleek humorist! he has the gridiron for a sign manual, an emblem not of martyrdom, but of good cheer; he was a butcher. "Wylliam Brace" belongs to the same fraternity as the clerk of Chatham, for that he hath "been so well brought up"; and so does "John Shacksper." But we are called upon not to "hang him with his pen and inkhorn about his neck." It is held by Malone, and other grave

antiquarians, that the pair of compasses standing opposite the name of "Thomas Dyxun"—a most clever drawing of an open pair of compasses, such as carpenters use, having a quadrant upon which



the leg moves—belongs not to "Thomas Dyxun," but to "John Shacksper":—"It nearly resembles a capital A," says Malone, "and was, perhaps, chosen in honour of the

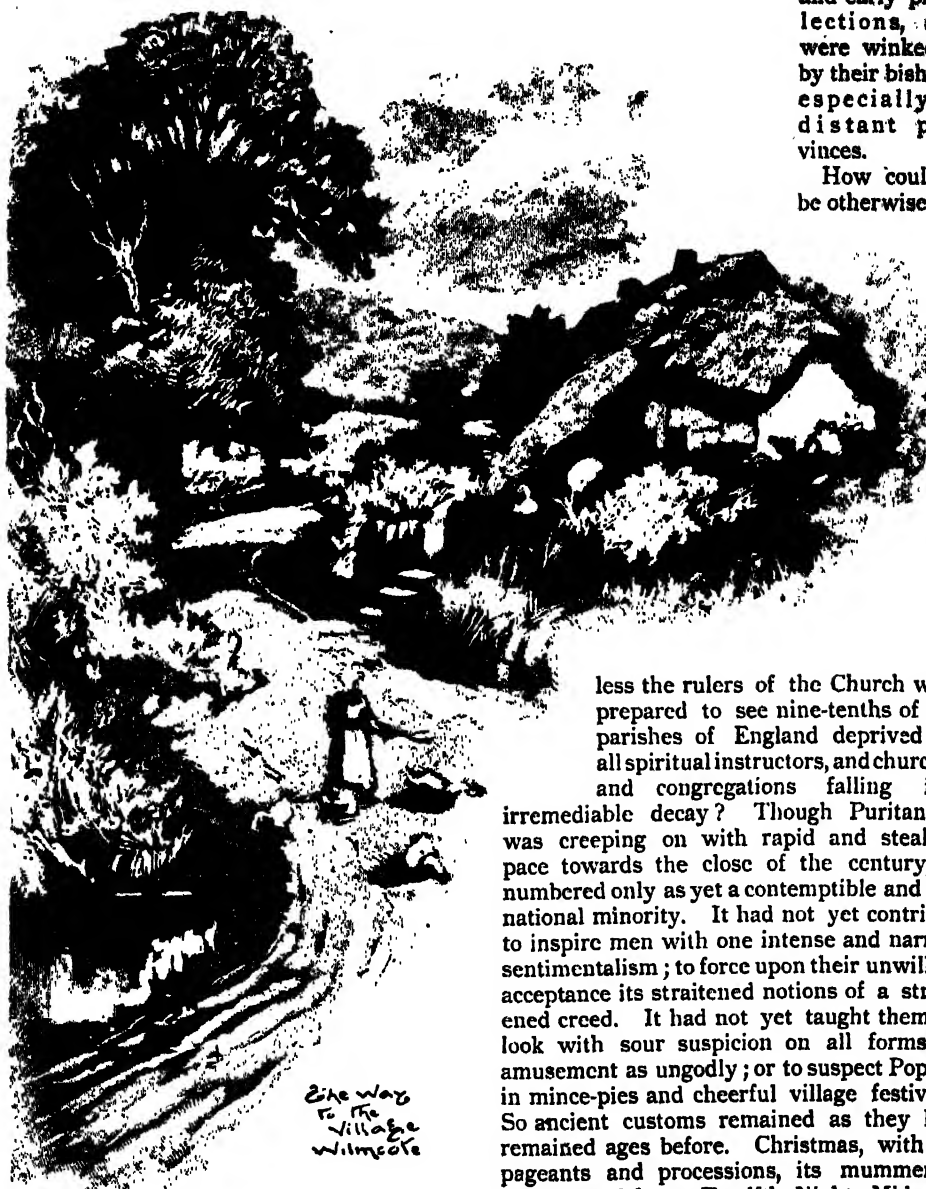


Approach
to
Mary Arden's
Cottage.

lady whom he had married." Assuredly the lady was greatly honoured in so apt a scholar; and when this Orlando took to carving A "on every tree," and writ it on every lawful occasion, it is surprising that the inspiration was not carried farther, and that the faculty thus developed by love did not terminate in real calligraphy. Be that as it may, one thing is certain,—the stock

of literary acquirement amongst the magnates of Stratford was not very large. The six remaining are all marksmen. And why should that stock of literature have been large? There were some who had been at grammar school, and they perhaps were as learned as the town-clerk; they kept him straight. But there had been enough turmoil about learning in those days to make goodman Whetely, and goodman Cardre, and their fellows somewhat shy of writing and Latin. They were not quite safe in reading.

The period at which John Shakespeare was united to Mary Arden was one of marked religious change, especially in country parishes, and which continued for some time afterwards, as it preceded the event. The Reformation had been powerful in developing individual character; whilst men revelled in their new-found liberty, and cared not to determine when it degenerated into licentiousness; whilst Nature avenged herself on the dry logical studies of a preceding age by a reaction which sometimes trespassed into animalism—the material forms of the old world and the old religion still held their ground. In the parish church the service was in English, not in Latin; but the ceremonies, the dresses, the fasts, and the festivals, though curtailed, remained essentially the same. Sermons were scarcely more frequent



The Way
to the
Village
Wilmcote

and early predilections, and were winked at by their bishops, especially in distant provinces.

How could it be otherwise, un-

less the rulers of the Church were prepared to see nine-tenths of the parishes of England deprived of all spiritual instructors, and churches and congregations falling into irremediable decay? Though Puritanism was creeping on with rapid and stealthy pace towards the close of the century, it numbered only as yet a contemptible and un-national minority. It had not yet contrived to inspire men with one intense and narrow sentimentalism; to force upon their unwilling acceptance its straitened notions of a straitened creed. It had not yet taught them to look with sour suspicion on all forms of amusement as ungodly; or to suspect Popery in mince-pies and cheerful village festivals. So ancient customs remained as they had remained ages before. Christmas, with its pageants and processions, its mummeries and its good fare; Twelfth Night, Midsummer's Eve, St. Mark's, St. Valentine's, and All Saints' days were duly observed. No inductive philosophy had yet appeared to disturb the popular belief in fairies or in witchcraft, in ghosts or in spectres; no ruthless geographer had stripped "the still-vexed Bermoothes" of its Ariel and its Caliban, or buried the wand which raised such potent marvels.

By the ingle-nook, especially in country

than they had been in earlier times; men and women went to confession, paid their Easter offerings, looked up to the parish priest as their spiritual guide. Most of these priests had been in their livings when Edward VI. was crowned, had complied with Queen Mary, had re-complied with Elizabeth, accommodated their new to their ancient faith, doubtless retained many of their old Romish practices

towns like Stratford—half a century behind the Metropolis, and exempt from those changes to which a great metropolis is subject—men still talked of elves and goblins, and still devoutly believed in them. They repeated from father to son the local traditions of their own and the neighbouring counties. They knew the battlefield of Tewkesbury; they had heard tell of the encounter when the Severn hid its head in fear of the bloodstained combatants. Kenilworth and Coventry, Gloucester and Northampton, were studded with historical associations. And many an anecdote, many a feat, a trait of manner, of person, and character,

more than a village, afterwards it became swollen into the dimensions of a small country town, where pocket knives and table cutlery were made, until at length its hugeness is amazing. The mechanic life of Birmingham, even in its fondest days of cock-fighting, has ever had a tinge of sound literature. The "lads of Birmingham" have never been mere town herders; whenever a full pocket occurred to them they have been off to the country, glad to escape from the bread-yielding smoke. Not a few are expert followers of Izaak Walton, others are given to butterflies, a few tread humbly the more minutely observing path of Sir John Lub-



of English worthies, would thus be handed down which would be sought in vain in the Chronicles of Hall or of Hollinshed. For, unlike the wars of modern times, the civil wars of England were fought by the tenants and labourers of the lord, who returned at the close of the struggle to the plough and the spade, to live and die, in most instances, at no great distance from the scene of their military exploits. So sons and grandsons learned to repeat the stories of meek Henry VI., of the fierce and forbidding Richard III., of the hateful De la Pole, and the gracious Edward.

Thus discourses our revered friend Dugdale of these parishes and districts, which in our present day of railroads are deemed of but small moment, the desire and tendency of the age being to herd in great cities. Well indeed was it that a Dugdale was raised up to make record of the past, or it would have been a blank and sorry sheet. At the time he wrote, Birmingham was little

bock, others are no mean students of botany, and there are not wanting instances of working men of Birmingham who have attained to a fair knowledge of astronomy. If, with their hitherto surroundings they have had strength of mind to tear themselves from the temptations besetting them on every side, what may not be looked for through a judicious removal of admitted worse than stumbling-blocks with which they have had to contend? Shakespeare is more known among its hard-fisted sons than among many of the "high steppers" of more fashionable regions. At the present day it possesses among its own bred-and-born sons one of the soundest Shakespearean scholars in the kingdom. Sam Timmins, of Birmingham, a man highly honoured by all who know him, is a household word among all who appreciate correct reading of the author, and would relegate to their right place all "improvers." Shakespeare has been the study of this life, and pursued with extreme earnestness.



ASTON CANTLOW.



WE are now led to Aston Cantlow, a thoroughly picturesque Warwickshire village, distant only some two miles from Wilmcote. At that period there was not any church at Wilmcote; the present church is quite modern. Aston Cantlow Church did the baptisms, marriages, and burials; and here Mary Arden was made John Shakespeare's wife. Tradition, in case of a Life of Shakespeare, where the circumstances of its ordinary relation are outside what may fairly be traceable from his transcendent works, must, to a large extent, necessarily govern the writer in his choice of such materials as public curiosity desire as a basis on which to weave the yearned-for popular story. In this instance, long centuries have run their course and intervene with their natural obliteration; added to these comes the further difficulty created and blown out by disbelievers who have faith in nothing but their own self-importance. Such traditions as have reason on their side, should have none the less weight on the minds of persons seeking truth. It must be borne in mind that what-

ever can at this distance of time be gathered up, was received from the mouths of old-fashioned men and women, who through generations proved a continuity of knowledge of the persons referred to, and whose interest and statements are worthy of all credibility, inasmuch as, unlike "Gossipy Aubrey," they were in no way suited or positioned to exercise inventive powers.

The statements made by these simple country folks should receive every consideration and weight; none of them know anything of Shakespeare beyond that they have been told he wrote plays, and that people came in large numbers to Henley Street, Stratford, to see the house in which he was born.

Within the last few years there have been wise old residents in Aston Cantlow who clung resolutely to certain facts concerning this William Shakespeare's father and mother, more especially his mother. Mary Arden, of Wilmcote, they held up as "a young lady of the great family of Arden," and that "in her youth there was a fine park all round the Arden homestead, and that the whole forest of Arden once belonged to them." Further, they believed that "the rich folk had, without right or leave," dispossessed the farmers and people of all their rights in these extensive forest lands, the which at the time gave them common rights of grazing cattle in the forest, as also

even greater privileges over many hundreds of acres of land, of which they have since been gradually deprived until the lands, once

These honest, though simple, villagers are by no means ignorant; they know well enough that there exists practically a law for the rich and a law for the poor, inasmuch as without money to set the law wheels in motion and grease them sufficiently for maintenance of action they are nowhere, and, in such case, the rich can do pretty much as they please. Not many of them know anything about Hamlet or Macbeth, or have ever seen a copy of Shakespeare's works. How should they? There were no Board schools in their



Aston Cantlow

through long unbroken usage theirs, have since been fenced in, and ruthlessly made the property of others.

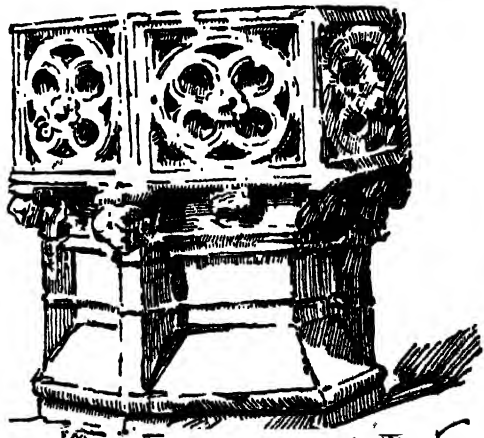
youth, but they are nevertheless proud of their district having produced a man whose fame fills the whole earth. Above all, they take special pride that their man Shakespeare stood his ground and fought in law the big man at Charlecote, whom he bearded, as they have it, in his own den.

There is a tradition strongly adhered to among the elder folk at Wilmcote and Aston Cantlow, to the effect that John Shakespeare's courting days entered on their initiatory stage during the lifetime of Mary Arden's father, but did not in the early stage progress so favourably as the young couple hoped for. An old dame of Snitterfield, aspiring to much wisdom as to the

Shakespeare family, persists "that, as the story goes, Maister John Shakespeare, as a young man was more than good-looking, and had a good deal of education higher than the folk around; the parson at Snitterfield, they say, always used to help him along." The inference is that he taught him in subjects and things beyond what was obtainable in the very few private schools then existent in Warwickshire. These village authorities, as is usual in such cases, pride themselves in maintaining a halo of mystery around the guardianship of their inherited stock-in-trade subject. For a century or more the same old story has been repeated and in like wording, thus:—"The saying be that Squire Arden's daughter wur in love with him; but her father, being a Catholic, wouldn't have him in the house excepting when he came to pay his rent." These words of the old lady exhausted the theme so far as village chronology went. It was about all she knew, and its derivation and explanation were alike obscure.

It comes down among the old folk of Wilmcote that the handsome young townsman from Stratford first made Mary Arden's acquaintance on an occasion of bearing rent-money to her father, and that the lucky moment was the payment of December winter quarter. They have it that the visits becoming more frequent than met the approval of her father, there was for a time a break in a link of the early love-chain. We may be assured Mary was too good a girl to run counter to her father's will; she had learned obedience to the fourth commandment. Mary was clearly the daughter on whom her father mainly leaned, and he was not a man unreasonably to thwart her, and so the difficulty was quickly overcome: John's walks from Stratford were soon made again joyous. He had to deal with a fond father whose heart was closely knit to that of his most dutiful and loving daughter, and thus all difficulties vanished as momentary cloud shades from their path. The then forest of Arden was not uninterruptedly covered with trees. There were pleasant meadows and orchards and streams among the shortening bye-paths he soon made his own. All was not winter bleakness and barrenness and misty air and leaden skies. He would have occasions of blue sky overhead and sunny air, scenes of beauty in the graceful forms spreading over the fair landscape; and there would be much of evergreen loveliness displayed in many a nook and angle. Mary would take after-

noon walks with him; they needed not to stray far from her home; the forest was in front of it, and she had learnt to study the thrusting aside the decaying garment of leaves, and would realize the beauties of trunk and branch disclosed nakedly in all their charm of varying forms in the still air of a frosty day. The bark of the beech may have tempted her lover to make it the depository of his mistress's name, a tender practice, holding good in these our days, as then and long afore. Mary would point out how wide in the wealth of winter green was the forest stretching far away in front of her home. She would speak of the plants that in spring and summer display so great gorgeousness of blossom and yet have persistent foliage of freshest green during winter, how the wintry lanes and meads and woods furnish each their quota of greenness to brighten the otherwise sad aspect of the out-door world. And then the special charm of moonlight on winter evenings in the roads and lanes edging the forest. Whether surrounded with a halo of glory when the air is filled with vapoury mists, or sailing through a sea of silver-tipped clouds, or standing out unrelieved against the clear blue vault of heaven, each would have its charm and be simply descanted of to him who had so great happiness in walking over from Stratford to profit by her close observance of Nature. The nightingale did not pour forth his melody into the woods: he and his mate had flown to sunnier climes. All bird-life was silent; but winter moonlight, then as now, gave impressions of exceptional beauty through the orb of night ruling in silent majesty.



old font
at Stratford

We will assume it to have been on a bright winter morning that John Shakespeare's fair young bride was led forth from the loved home of her youth at Wilmcote for her wedding celebration at the parish church at Aston Cantlow. Bright and early all were astir on that happy morning. Let the bridal day be a festive one, whatever of care God may deem for good to be the burden borne in after life. And it was so in Mary Arden's case; hers was a marriage of affection, her husband a good-looking young man of becoming position, of recognised ability, and well-conducted in life; she, the daughter of a large freeholder of no mushroom lineage, and, by her father's decease, in possession of no mean estate. Coaches there were none in those days, unless the broad-wheeled vehicles by aid of which

first family, though due allowance must be made for difficulties so often besetting the path of a stepmother, however kindly disposed.

The remembrance of John's second wife having brought a full quiver of no less than seven sons and daughters of her own to be tacked on to his already numerous tribe will crop up as a preventive cause of the perfect harmony presumed to exist in well-ordered homes. Mary Arden must have been a wonderful girl to keep these elements out of the play of discord. She achieved it, and her father loved her as he should in the triumph of such Herculean labour.

We will believe her father's wife was of the bridal party, which it is safe to assume included the number of favourite young belles officiating as bridesmaids to see the cere-



WHERE JOHN SHAKESPEARE AND MARY'S WEDDING BREAKFAST WAS HELD.

hay and corn were borne from the fields to rick and barn, and when threshed and bagged borne off to realize the occasionally fabulous prices of the nearest market. The happy group had to foot it all the way, the distance was but short, and all hearts were light. The hush of centuries of silence has hidden from us the name of him who acted the parental part and gave the fair maiden away. We know "she was beautiful, and fair, and amiable." Such character is ascribed to her as indisputable, for has not Warwickshire resounded with these very words, coming down from the day of her youthful prime, and eagerly confirmed when her son William became the pride of the world? We may be sure it was a faithful friend of Mary's deceased father to whom it was entrusted to lead her forth to another home. Robert Arden's second wife does not appear to have gained very strongly the affection of his

mony carried through, free of let or hindrance. John Shakespeare would walk out from Stratford supported by his "best man." So long ago as Shakespeare's day it was deemed necessary there should be an official holding unlimited power over the will and body of every man perpetrating matrimony, but whether his duties were of the bottle-holder class or of constabulary power to prevent escape under the influence of repentant shadowy moments, is difficult of solution now as then. John Shakespeare, supported and stayed by his official, would arrive at the God's Acre gate in good time to meet the happy group from Wilmcote, with whom there would be much affectionate embrace ere entering the portal of Mother Church, where the holy bonds were welded with a right Christian, God-fearing strength which defied such unhallowed breaking as rules rampant in modern days, and makes induce-

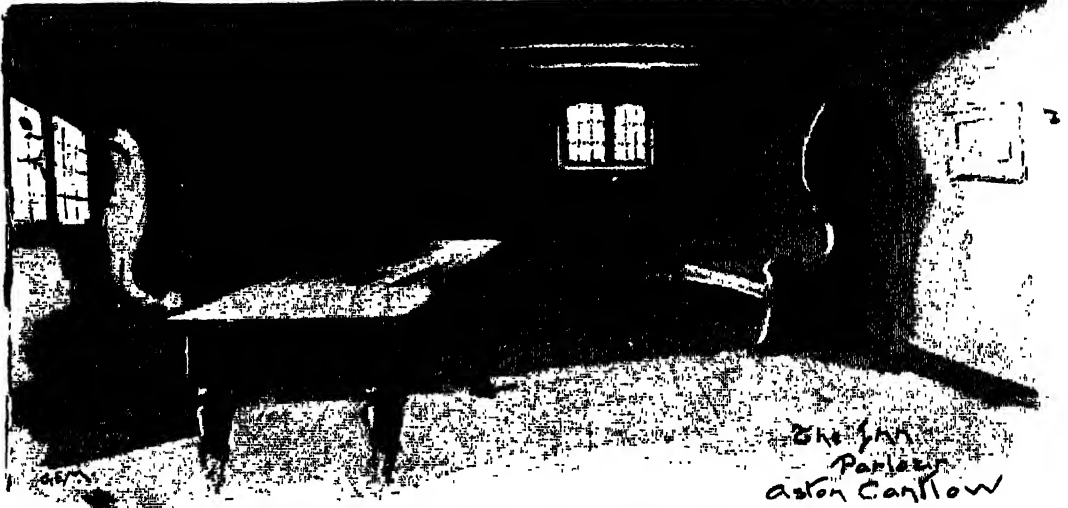
ments for the violation of a law above all earthly laws.

The wedding breakfast was held at the King's Head Inn at Aston Cantlow, opposite the Court Leete House—a sketch of the room itself is given with this. Tradition points to this as the room in which the happy pair assembled, and if ever tradition was worthy of acceptance, it is so in this instance. All the generations since have vouched for its truth; far be it from the writer to discredit the loving record so sacredly attested.

As the multitude of Shakespeare readers becomes swollen with time, there will be an increasing thirst to dwell on the personal history and character of his mother. With Ward Beecher, all will wonder where in that coarse age, when Queen and ladies talked familiarly, as women would blush to

the childish heart, and quicken into life the struggling, slumbering elements of a sensitive nature. Future generations will dwell on that beautiful scene where he represents Desdemona as amazed and struck dumb with the grossness and brutality of the charges which had been thrown upon her, yet so dignified in the consciousness of her own purity, so magnanimous in the power of disinterested, forgiving love, and feel that he was portraying no ideal excellence, but only reproducing, under fictitious and suppositious circumstances, the patience, magnanimity, and enduring love which had shone upon him in the household words and ways of his mother.

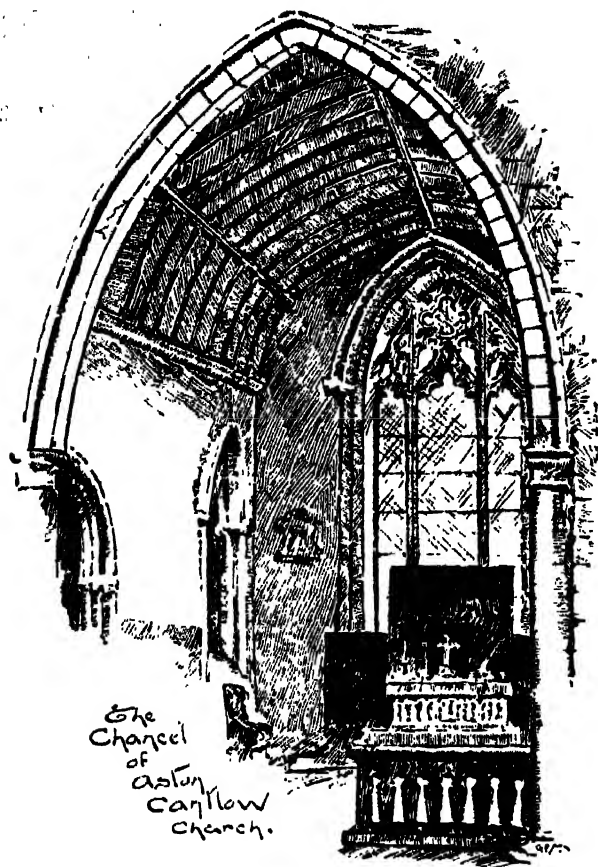
The folk of the "grand old county" have just pride in their historian Dugdale. No more faithful topographer than he. His was



THE ROOM IN WHICH THE WEDDING BREAKFAST WAS GIVEN.

talk now, and when the broad, coarse wit of the "Merry Wives of Windsor" was gotten up to suit the taste of a virgin Queen, when women were such and so, were found those models of lily-like purity, women so chaste in soul and pure in language. In such an age, his deep heart-knowledge of pure womanhood must only have come to him through the deep impress on the child's soul of a mother's purity. We summon up visions of one of those women whom the world knows not of—silent, deep-hearted, loving—whom the coarser and more practically efficient jostle aside and underrate for their lack of interest in the noisy chit-chat and commonplace of the day, but who yet have a sacred power, like that of the spirit of peace, to brood with dove-like wings over

a most laborious task, and honestly and with all zeal he carried his purpose to the desired end. To say that matters and things are chronicled in Dugdale is to make assurance doubly sure. Even the courts of justice so respect his records as to receive them as reliable evidence. But his excellence does not end here; his power of description is on a par with his truthfulness, and now, after the lapse of centuries, we fall back on his descriptions as delightful reading. As an example, let the reader take him as companion to Aston Cantlow—see how he makes us at home with the families of the Olden Time. We live and move among them, we compare their style and fashions with the modern, their moneys and our to-day coins and their yields.



The
Chancel
of
Aston
Cantlow
Church.

"Being now past that large parish of Wootton Wawen, I came next to Aston Cantlow, situated on the southern bank of the Alne. Before the Norman invasion, Algar Earl of Mercia was possessed herof; but upon that great distribution then made by King William unto his friends and followers, this place, with divers lands of a large extent, as well here as in other counties, was conferred (as I guess) upon one Richard, a noble Norman; for it appears by the general survey begun about the fourteenth year of that king's reign, that Osbernus fil. Ricardi then enjoyed it with several other fair lordships lying in the shire; as also in the counties of Worcester, Hereford, Bedford, Salop, and Nottingham, whose principal seat was (as I also conjecture) at Ricard's castle in Herefordshire, which, being (doubtless) built by the same Richard for better awing of the vanquished English, did afterwards retain his name, and continueth it to this day. In that authentic Record, this place is written Estone, by

reason of its eastern site from Alcester (I presume) which was of a more ancient plantation, and the value thereof then certified to be VIII., being esteemed at V hides, having a church, as also one mill, with woods of a mile in length and as much in breadth, the descendants of which Osbernus, I have put in Farnborough, for unto them did it continue but a while, Tankerville, who was Camerarius Normannial, possessing it in 15 H. II.; yet no otherwise than as a Fermor to the King, as appears by same Records.

"But in 6 Joh. Will. de Cantilupe obtained it with the corn and stock thereon, which the Sheriff was commanded to value, and according to the rate they should be priced at, to deliver them unto him: and from hence had it the addition of his name joined thereto, for distinction from the other Astons in this county. Here hath been anciently a park, and by the tradition of the inhabitants, a castle also, situate southwards of the church; but the moat and banks thereof are now so levelled that there is scarce any appearance of it: at which castle, forasmuch as the before specified William and his descendants had (without doubt) their principal

residence, till by marriage with Eva, the daughter and heir of Will. de Braose, to Will., his grandson, the castle and honour of Bergavenny came to this family. I have here thought fit to say something historically of them.

"This Will. de Cantelu or Cantelupe (for I find him both ways written) was a person of great eminence and power in his time. In 1 Joh. he had a discharge for the Scutage then due from him. In 3, 4, 5, and 6 Joh. he was Sheriff of this county and Leicestershire, and upon leaving that office, constituted Governor of the Castles of Hereford, Wilton, and Purrebach: nay, in those great differences betwixt the said King and Pope Innocent III. in 13 Joh. he is taken notice of to have been one of that King's Chief Counsellors and Directors; and from the 12th year to the end of his reign, had again the custody of the before-specified counties. In 15 Joh. he obtained the King's special precept to the Barons of his Exchequer to respite their demand of CCCC marks debt,

due by him, viz., CCC marks for a fine, which he was to have paid for the wardship, and a custody of the land of Henry de Longcamp's heir; and C marks which the said king had lent him upon his voyage into Almaine. In 16 Joh. he had y Scutage of his Tenants, in satisfaction for those soldiers which were then maintained by him in Poicton for the King's service; as also the same year was, amongst others, a witness to that notable Charter granted by the said King to the Archb. of Canterb. and other Bishops, in behalf of all the churches and monasteries of England; and in 17 Joh. got a pardon for a debt of CCLXII marks and XVID., which was by his own agreement to have been as a fine for obtaining the Countess of Curcux in marriage for his son. And yet, notwithstanding all these favours, it appears that in that great defection of the Barons, the same year, he forsook the King

and adhered to them; but did not persist long in that error, as it seems, for shortly after I find that he had a grant of all the lands of Nich. de Verdon and so also of Thurstane de Mountfort, great actors in that Rebellion; and was made Governor of the strong castle of Kenilworth in this county, being then Steward of the King's household. Having thus shewed in what esteem he was with K. John, let us now take a view of his favour with K. H. III., and of his eminency in those times. In 1 of that K. reign, he was in person with the Royal Army at the siege of Mountsorrel Castle in Leicestershire, and at raising the siege which the rebellious barons had made against the Castle of Lincoln. In 2 H. III. again made Sheriff of this county and Leicestersh., in which office he continued till the 8th year of that King's reign. In 5 H. III. he had the K. special letter authorizing him to receive of

the several Kts. fees held of him Xs., in respect that he was in person with the K. at the siege of Bitham Castle in Lincolnshire. In 6 H. III. he had by the K.'s special command, all the castles that belonged to Reginald de Braose, deceased, committed to his charge, being the Steward to the K. as he had been to his father; but it seems that his chief residence was then at Kenilw. Castle before specified, but no less doth the Record, appointing him timber for repair of the buildings, for his habitation there, import. Howbeit, the same year, being made Governor of Hereford Castle, he had in December 8 H. III., a discharge of his Sherrifalty here, and of the custody of Kenilworth Castle, which was thereupon delivered up to John Russell, unto whom also those counties were then committed. It should seem that about this time he adhered to the Earl of Chester and some other of the Barons, who began to swell against the King and give out big words on behalf of that Earl, whose castles the said King thought fit to seize; but seeing themselves not strong enough to go through with their design, were glad to submit. For which offence I do not find that the King's displeasure stuck long



old Arch
at
Canlow
Church.

old
Figur
of
South doorway



the Collage of
Aston Cantlow

upon him in regard that within three years after by his Pat. bearing date 18 August, he confirmed unto him this manor of Eston, which formerly did belong to Raph. de Tankerville Chamberlain (of Normandy), with the Manor of Middleston, that pertained to Gilbert de Vilers, to hold till such time as the said King should please to restore them unto the right heirs of the said Ralph and Gilbert; which manors he, the said Will. had first received by the grant of K. John's as the same record testifieth; for confirmation whereof, as also for a mercate and faire here. He then gave the K. a fine of XV marks. And in 13 H. III. received further testimony of the King's favour by a pardon of XL marks due from him to have been paid into the Exchequer for certain amerciements laid upon him by the Justices Itinerant; and an acceptance of X marks per an. till the C marks lent unto him by the King John, were satisfied, which sum the said King delivered unto him when he went on his embassy into Almaine, as I have already intimated. In 15 H. III. he had another confirmation of this Lordship, extending also to his heirs, with a special Proviso that if the said King or his heirs should afterwards restore it to the heirs of Tankerville, he the said William and his heirs should have other lands of as good value in recompense thereof, that Charter of Confirmation bearing date at Wenlox 26 Maii. Of which noble person I further find

that he obtained the advouson and patronage of the Priory of Studley (near this place, as I have there shewed) from Peter de Corbucion, heir to the Founder; whereunto he gave a fair portion of lands lying in Shottwell: That he also built an Hospital at the gates of that Monastery: That he bore for his Armes Gules three flower de lices or, as by his seal appeareth, within the compass whereof Scil. Towards the lower part of the shield there is a star with a crescent,



The old
Forge
Aston Cantlow.



THE
OLD
COURT IS A
HOUSE.
ASTON CAPTLOW.

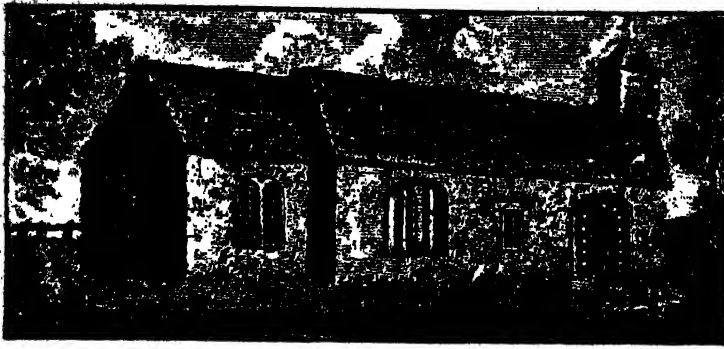
SITUATE OPPOSITE KING'S HEAD INN.

which is a Badge (as hath been observed by judicious antiquaries) of his service in the Holy wars: and that he departed this life 7th Apr. 23 H. III., being then very aged, leaving issue several sons, viz., William his son and heir; Walter a priest, and



at the
Back of the
Ting's Head Inn
ASTON CAPTLOW

employed by King H. III. as his agent to the Court of Rome, afterwards elected Bishop of Worcester, whose story I refer to Godwyn; John Lord of Snitterfield in this County; and Nicholas, of whom I find no more than the bare mention. Which Will., being a martial man as well as his father, and accompanying him at raising the siege of Lincoln Castle, in 1 H. III., had in 15 H. III., much of his Father's estate passed over to him, for which he then did his homage to the King, and in 24 H. III., obtained a special charter for exempting him from any suit to the county or Hundred Courts, Leet, aid to the Sherif and Hidage for all his lands in England. After which, viz., in 26 H. III., he attended the King in that his French expedition, which was so unprosperous, and having been in 28 H. III. sent with other of the great nobility, to solicit the prelates for an aid of money, according to the Pope's Letters on the King's behalf, was the next ensuing year one of those that went Ambassador to the General Council then held at Lions, there to complain of the greivous exactions used here in England by the Court of Rome, as well as from the Clergy as Laity, and to crave remedy for the same, which William, bearing a devout affection to the Canons of Studley before specified, gave to the Hospital of his Father's building there, lands to the value of Xli. per an. lying within this Lordship; as also certain rent and pasturage for Cattell, in



Old Church of Stretton-upon-Fosse, the Priest of which was in close friendship with the Arden and Shakespeare families.

him and Margaret, the daughter of Edmund de Lucy, was ever consummated, as their parents had designed when he was scarce two years old, I cannot tell; but sure I am that he had no issue: for John the son of Henry de Hastings and Milicent then the wife of Eudo (or Yvo) la Zouche were found to be his sisters and heirs, which Henry, being in minority in 36

Southernkeston, with the Church of Hemes-ton, in Devonshire. And having besides all this, obtained a special charter for exempting their woods, situate within the Forest of Fekenham, from any view of the King's Foresters and Verderers, and being Steward to the King, as his Father was, as also a most faithful Councillor left issue by Milisent the daughter of Hugh de Gornay, Will. his son and heir, Thomas Bishop of Hereford (who in 34 E. I. was canonized for a Saint), and Julian the wife of Sir Rob. de Tregez, and departed this life in 35 H. III., immediately whereupon William his eldest son, performing his homage and giving security for payment of his Relief, which was Cli., had livery of his lands. Which William in 37 H. III., obtained a pardon from the King for pulling down the Castle of Penros in Wales, belonging to John de Monmuth, as also for five marks, at which this manour of Aston was amerced, for protecting one Rob. de Shelfkill, who had been indicted for certain misdemeanours: and in 38 H. III. was constituted Governor of Bovelt Castle, in Brecknockshire. To the before specified Hospital built at the Gate of the Priory of Studley he gave the advouson of the Church here at Aston, and having wedded Eva, one of the daughters and co-heirs to Will. de Braose of Brecknock, with whom he had the territory of Upper Went, and other lands in England and Wales, departed this life in the flower of his youth, to the great grief of many, leaving issue by her the said Eva, George his son and heir, and two daughters. Of which George (being scarce three years old at that time), I have found very little that is memorable, his death happening before he arrived to years, whereby he could be qualified for any great action, viz., in 1 Edw. I. Therefore, whether the marriage betwixt

H. III. and in ward to Guy de Luzignian the King's half-brother, had the benefit of his marriage, then disposed of by the said Guy unto Will. de Cantilupe before specified, who gave his daughter Joane thus in wedlock to him. Whereupon by partition made betwixt those coheirs, the said Milicent had for her share the Castle of Totenesse in Com. Devon. The manours of Eyston in Com. Bedf. and Haringworth in Northamptonshire with other fair possessions in England and Wales, as also the advouson of the Priory of Studley in this county: and John de Hastings, the son of Joane beforementioned, had Bergavenny with the Castle and Honour (which were the inheritance of Eva de Breause his grandmother) together with the Castle of Kilgaran in Com. Pembr. and amongst other large territories in England and Wales, this manour of Aston, then valued at LIXli. iiiis. id. per an., all which were in the King's hands at the time of the said partition made, by reason of his minority. But touching the family of Hastings I shall speak historically in Fillongley, and therefore purpose to make no other mention of them here than what particularly relates to this place.

"In 13 E.I. this John de Hastings claimed a Court Leet with Assize of Bread and Beer, Weiss, Gallows and Free Warren within this manour by prescription; all which were allowed. From which time this manour was for divers descents, enjoyed by the posterity of the said John, as I could sufficiently demonstrate if need were, except for so long as Will. de Clinton, Earl of Huntingdon held two parts of it, in right of Julian his wife, widow to John de Hastings Father of Laurence Earl of Pembroke: after the death of which Laurence it appears that it was held of the King in capite by the service of one Foot soldier in

the Warrs of Wales, with a bow without a string and a helmet for his head, by the space of XL days at his own proper costs as often as there should be any hostility in Wales. From which family of Hastings it descended not to the Lord Grey of Ruthin, through the heir female; but by virtue of a special entail made by John de Hastings, E. of Pembroke, son and heir to the before-specified Laurence (whereof in Fillongley I shall speak), was settled together with the castle of Bergavenny and other large possessions, upon Sir Will. de Beauchamp, Kt., second son of Thomas E. of Warwick and his heirs. Which William bearing the title of Lord Bergavenny died, seized thereof in 12

of Cantilupe repossessed it again, for in 24 E. I. it appears, that the said Canons granted to John de Hastings, then Lord of this manour, lands to the value of XIIIli. per an., lying herc, in exchange for the said advouson. Nay, I find that after this, the Family of Hastings, being potent, had it again from the said Canons; for in 19 E. III. did Laurence de Hastings Earl of Pembroke pass it away to Will. de Clinton Earl of Huntingdon and his heirs; who immediately thereupon gave it to the Priory of Makstoke, then newly by him founded, whereupon the Canons of Mackstoke obtained License from the K. for appropriating it to their House, which appropriation was accordingly accom-



OLDEN PROCESSES OF INDUCTION INTO THE ORDER OF THE BATH. FROM ENGRAVINGS IN DUGDALE'S HISTORY OF WARWICKSHIRE.

H. IV., from whom it descended to Ric. Beauchamp Earl of Worcester his son and heir; whose daughter and heir Elizabeth being wedded to Sir Edw. Nevill Knight (a younger son to Raph. Earl of Westmerland) thenceforth summoned to Parl. as Lord Bergavenny, brought it, with other lands of a large, extent to that noble family, wherein it hath ever since continued being enjoyed by the right honourable John Lord Bergavenny at this day.

"The Church (dedicated to St. John Bapt.) being given to the Canons of Studley (as I have formerly intimated) by the last Will. de Cantilupe in H. III. time was in an. 1291 (19 E. I.) valued at XXXIII marks: which grant did not stand so firm but that the heirs

plished in the same year, by Wolstan then Bishop of Worcester, as by his instrument dated at Blocklegh 4 Oct. appeareth; and confirmed by his Chapter, by reason whereof, they had a yearly pension of XIIIli. IIIId. payable on the Feast day of the Annunciation of Our Lady granted to them: In which year was likewise an ordination of the Vicaridge. But notwithstanding all this, it so fell out afterwards, that the Canons of Studley, by colour of their original title, go into the possession thereof again, whereupon great suits arose betwixt those of Mackstoke and them, yet in the end they of Makstoke prevailed; who, to strengthen their title, had the King's confirmation in 5 H. IV. For which they gave a fine of LXXIIli. XIIs. that they might

enjoy it according to the tenor of the appropriation thereof so made to them as aforesaid. In 26 H. VIII. the Vicaridge was valued at Xli., at which time the Synodalls and Procurations issuing out of it were Xs. Vd. ob.

"In this Church there was antiently a certain Fraternity or Gild, consisting of the Parishioners only, being founded by them to the honour of God and the blessed Virgin, but it had no lawful establishment till 9 E. IV., at which time, upon the humble petition of the inhabitants, License was granted to Sir Edw. Nevill, Knight, then Lord of the manour, that he should so settle and order the same as that there might be a certain Priest

yearning to make more frequent visits to their peaceful surroundings than the calls of our home nearer the Great Babel have ever permitted. Mary's old and most truly romantic home, in appearance as in all its surroundings, must ever possess charms second to no other of the sacred spots associated with the poet's memory. Moreover, it is as it was in her day; the improver or restorer have never displayed any handiwork here; we feel instinctively that all is pretty much as Mary left it on the happy morn she went forth to be made John Shakespeare's wife. The very doors seem as though on the same hangings, and the window frames in many rooms cling to the



maintained there, to celebrate divine service daily at the Altar of the blessed Virgin in the said Church, for the good estate of the said K. Edw. IV. and Eliz. his Consort, as also for the Brethren and Sisters of that Fraternitie, during this life, and for the souls after their departure hence, and the souls of all the faithfull deceased: which accordingly was effected, and lands disposed thereunto for that purpose, valued at VIII. IXs. IId. ob. per an. in 37 H. VIII."

In saying farewell to Aston Cantlow and Wilmcote villages, delightful in themselves, and specially sacred to Mary Arden, the wise and not less loving mother of the great master, how oft has been the writer's

tiny leaded quaint bits of glass that Mary oftentimes polished in order that her favourite flowers blooming in the front garden might have their varying beauties better appreciated from within. The tottering old buildings, quaint in the extreme, converse only of the past. About everything there is a look back to a time and occupancy on which the mind delights to revert in order to conjure up, through their simplicity, their domestic endearments associated with the memory of his mother. What more delightful than a day or two in the quiet hostleries of either village, free to roam by day and rest at night surrounded by associations the product of such pilgrimages?



Henley Street
Birthplace



THE BIRTHPLACE, HENLEY STREET.



ALL pilgrims seek the house in Henley Street, Stratford, where John Shakespeare resided, out of which he tripped gaily to be a charmer for Mary Arden at Wilmcote, and where his world-renowned son William was born, and which must ever be a principal object of deepest interest. It is the birthplace of Shakespeare; and in a deed recently discovered, and dated

January, 1597, whereby John Shakespeare conveys to George Badger a strip of ground extending from Henley Street to the Guild-pits, the house now shown as the birthplace is alluded to as then in the tenure or occupation of the former. We thus possess a testimony in this question which, as Halliwell remarks, "viewed in connection with tradition and later authorities, may fairly be considered decisive."

The world's William Shakespeare, the son of John Shakespeare and Mary Arden (a gentle name, indeed), was born April, 1564; the day of his birth, as averred by tradition, being the twenty-third of that month, or St. George's day, the anniversary of the patron saint of England. Closely on his birth the great plague broke out in Stratford; all his family, however, providentially escaped the ravages:

His baptism is recorded three days afterwards in the parish register of Holy Trinity, Stratford, traced from the original, thus :—

an instructor of Shakespeare's early youth, and, like good Simon, a guide in the critical time of adolescence and an attached friend

1564
April 26

Enholmus filius Johannis Shakespeare

As his baptism took place in Holy Trinity Church on the 26th, and as Joseph Green, pastor of the Holy Guild and master of its School at that time, in an extract which he made from the register of Shakespeare's baptism, wrote on the margin, "Born on the

in after life, living at the time, an educated and precise dominic of leading position in Stratford, is an authority not to be gainsayed, although some writers assume that because Shakespeare's sole granddaughter was married on the 22nd of April, 1626,



DRAWN BY EDGAR FLOWER, OF STRATFORD.

23rd,"—in accordance with the important record, this has been accepted as the day on which he saw the light, the later date being that in which the infant forehead was signed with the sign of the cross as the banner seal of the holy faith in which he became an enrolled member. Good Father Green, master of Jolliffe's School, and who, with Simon Hunt, his successor in the mastership, was

ten years exactly from the poet's death, therefore the reason for choosing this day might have had a reference to her illustrious grandfather's birthday, which would be celebrated as a festival in the family.

In fixing on the 23rd of April, 1654, as the birthday of the poet, there may be inaccuracy, and that the real birthday is more a matter of inference than of knowledge, as birthdays



DRAWN BY EDGAR FLOWER, OF STRATFORD.

are in many other cases. Everybody knows that the 25th of December must be several months wrong for Christmas Day. Pursuing, however, a curious and interesting process of reasoning, Shakespeare's biographers have, without exception, decided on this day as the date of his advent; tradition countenances it, and in default of any evidence to the contrary, it is treated as what it professes to be. It is sufficient to know that the register of Stratford's shrine solemnly and unmistakably records the baptism of "Gulielmus filius Johannes Shakespeare, on April 23rd." England was, as yet, scarcely set loose from Romanism; the national church held fast to most of the ancient formulas, and was not likely to abandon them under the government of a woman like Elizabeth, and so, naturally enough, baptism, being the child's initiation into Christianity, was reckoned its true birth. Until baptised it was out of the pale of salvation, and pious parents lost no time in securing its spiritual safety. Sceldom more than two or three days elapsed before it was borne to the font, and then its baptism was recorded as a matter of course. John Shakespeare was a respectable and God-fearing citizen, faithful to his lights, and no doubt followed the customs of the time.

This interesting edifice, the resort of so many pilgrims, was the residence of John Shake-

speare from his first settlement in Stratford, first as tenant of the Ardens, and afterwards as proprietor, till his death in 1601. On the latter event taking place it passed to his son William, by whom it was devised in succession to his daughters Susannah and Judith. Originally it seems to have formed one residence, but it was afterwards divided—the western part, containing the birth-room, being latterly tenanted by a butcher; whilst the eastern portion formed an inn. It has been very carefully and successfully restored to what may be regarded as approximating to its original condition in the time of Shakespeare. This old house in which John and Mary commenced their married life has passed through the usual vicissitudes and changes incident to long years of existence. By Shakespeare's will it was bequeathed to his sister Joan—Mrs. William Hart—to be held by her under the yearly rent of twelve pence, during her life, and at her death to revert to his daughter Susanna and her descendants. His sister Joan appears to have been living there at the time of his decease, in 1616. She is known to have been living there in 1639—twenty-three years later—and doubtless she resided there till her death in 1646. The estate then passed to Susanna—Mrs. John Hall—from whom, in 1649, it descended to her grand-

child, Lady Barnard, who left it to her kinsmen, Thomas and George Hart, grandsons of Joan. In this line of descent it continued, subject to many of those infringements which are incidental to poverty, till 1806, when William Shakespeare Hart, the seventh in collateral kinship from the poet, sold it to Thomas Court, from whose family it was afterwards purchased for the town of Stratford, or, if preferred, for the nation. Meantime the property, which originally consisted of two tenements and a considerable piece of adjacent land, had, little by little, been curtailed of its fair proportions by the sale of its gardens and orchards. The two tenements—i.e., the two in one—had been subdivided. A part of the building became an inn—at first called "The Maidenhead," afterwards "The Swan," and finally "The

increasing volume, she must have coked out a fair living in her self-constituted capacity of custodian.

It was in 1847 that this venerated and inestimable relic became what may be termed a national possession. In 1856, John Shakespeare, of Workington Field, near Ashby de la Zouch, gave £2,500 to preserve and restore it, and in two years it was, under the superintendence of Edward Gibbs, an architect of Stratford, isolated by the demolition of the cottages at its sides and in the rear, repaired wherever decay was visible, set in perfect order, and restored as nearly as possible to its ancient self.

The house, separated as it has been from the adjoining buildings, attracts at once the eye of the visitor. It is one of those old edifices which are still frequently to be seen throughout Warwickshire composed of a framework of timber, formed in squares, with the intervening compartments filled up with mud and plaister, or as it is locally termed "wattle and dab"; latticed windows and high pitched gable roofs. Behind is what may be termed a Shakespearean garden, planted with the flowers to which the poet has alluded in his works.

The quaint house has been painted, engraved, photographed, and described *ad infinitum*. Hundreds of pictures of it are scattered over Christendom where one of

Swan and Maidenhead." Another part became a butcher's shop. The aspect of the buildings in their social conditions will be seen by the engravings in this volume. The old dormer windows and the quaint old porch noticeable in the older sketch disappeared. A new brick casing was foisted on the tavern end of the structure. In front of the butcher's shop appeared a sign announcing "William Shakespeare was born in this house. N.B.—A Horse and Taxed Cart to Let." Still later another sign was hung out—"The immortal Shakespeare was born in this house." From 1793 to 1820, Thomas and Mary Hornby, the latter, who set up to be a poet and wrote tragedy and comedy and philosophy, took great delight in exhibiting the place to visitors, and as by that time the pilgrimage had swollen into an

Solomon's temple may be found. Undoubtedly it ranked as a capacious and comfortable dwelling in its day. It is one of the skeleton type so common to the Elizabethan age, that is, the oaken bonework of the frame is even with the brickwork of the outer walls; thus showing the fleshless ribs of the house to the outside world. The rooms are small and very low between joints; still the one assigned by tradition as the birthplace of the great poet is large enough for the greatest of men to be born in. Its ceiling overhead and side walls afford not one hundredth of the needed tablet-space for the registry of the names of all who have thus sought to leave their cards in homage of the illustrious memory. The whole surface, and even the small windows, have been written



and re-written over by the pilgrims to this shrine from different countries. Here are names from the extremest end of the Anglo-Saxon world—from Newfoundland and New Zealand, and all the English-speaking countries between. The Americans have contributed a large contingent to these records of the pencil. There is something very interesting and touching even in the homage they bring to his name. He was the last great English poet who sang to the unbroken family of the English race. They were then all gathered around England's hearthstone, unconscious of the mighty expansion which the near future was to develop.

Much of the appearance of rural antiquity has been scraped and painted, and roofed and clapboarded out of this really venerable home of the poet. One feels that it would almost have been better not to have "restored it." This is easily said, but we must remember that future generations had to be considered. A feeling of depression seizes the visitor on entering the "house," which at first sight conveys the impression of being poverty-stricken, squalid, and comfortless in appearance. Is it possible that amidst these sordid surroundings Shakespeare passed his boyhood during the years of his father's prosperity, and that there he grew to early manhood? The thoughts wander to stately Charlecote, the home of the Lucys, who were but simple country gentlemen; and it is here, in this lowly home, there is realization known and felt from how humble a condition of life the greatest writer of the world had arisen. But there is consolation in the fact of their not being reduced to it; they had risen to it. This was John Shakespeare's house in the days of his brief prosperity. How Shakespeare must have felt what a sham was the pretension of gentry set up for his father when the coat of arms was asked and obtained by the actors' money from the Heralds College—that coat of arms which he prized because it made him a gentleman by birth. This it is, more than the squalid appearance of the place, which saddens the visitor, for one feels sure that the sting of those who complained that Clarenceux had made the man who lived in his house a gentleman of court armour was not without shadow of foundation.

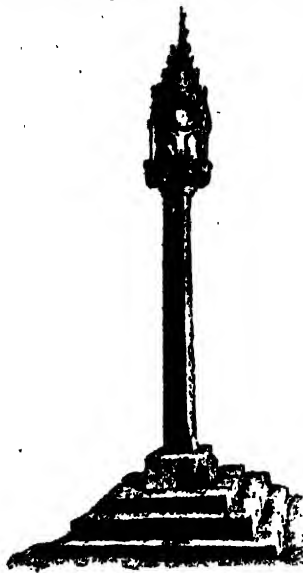
When on a visit in 1849 to Washington Irving at his charming villa, "Sunnyside," on the banks of the mighty Hudson, the author of the "Sketch Book" referred with rapture to the writer of this volume to his excitement when at Stratford. He frequently harked back to his pilgrimage to the shrine, and in resolute, emphatic language, endorse all the relics that had fallen under his vision there. Not the least impressed on his memory was the venerable chair in the Henley Street house, which he had thus described:—

"The most favourite object of curiosity, however, is Shakespeare's chair. It stands in the chimney corner of a small gloomy chamber, just behind what was his father's shop. Here he may many a time have sat, when a boy, watching the slowly revolving



spit with all the longing of an urchin, or of an evening listened to the cronies and gossips of Stratford dealing forth churchyard tales and legendary anecdotes of the troublesome times of England. In this chair it is the custom of every one that visits the house to sit. Whether this be done with the hope of imbibing any of the inspiration of the bard, I am at a loss to say—I merely mention the fact; and mine hostess privately assured me that though built of solid oak, such was the fervent zeal of devotees that it had to be new bottomed at least once in three years. It is worthy of notice, also, in the history of this remarkable chair, that it partakes something of the volatile nature of the Santa Casa of Loretto, or the flying chair of the Arabian enchanter, for, though sold to a Russian Princess, yet, strange to say, it has found its way back to the old chimney corner."

The builders of this house must have done their work thoroughly well, for even after all these years of rough usage, and of slow



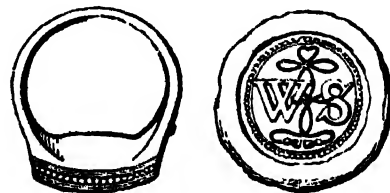
Old Cross at Henley-in-Arden.

but incessant decline, the great timbers remain solid, the plastered walls are firm, the huge chimney-stack is as permanent as a rock, and the ancient flooring only betrays by the scooped out aspect of its boards, and the high polish on the heads of the nails which fasten them down, that it belongs to a period of remote antiquity. The cottage stands close on the street, according to the ancient customs of building throughout Stratford; and, entering through a little porch, the pilgrim stands at once in that low-ceiled, flag-stoned room, with its wide fireplace, so familiar as the chimney-corner of Shakespeare's youthful days. Within the fireplace on either side are seats fashioned in the brickwork; and here, as it is pleasant to imagine, the boy-poet often sat on winter nights, gazing dreamily into the flames, and building castles in that fairyland of fancy which was his celestial inheritance. From this room you pass, by a narrow, well-worn staircase to the chamber above, which has ever been known as the place of the poet's birth. An antiquated chair of the 16th century formerly stood in the right-hand corner. To the left is a small fireplace made in the rectangular form, which is still used. All around are visible the great beams which are the framework of the building—beams of seasoned British oak that will last for ever. Opposite to the door of entrance is a three-fold casement (the original window), one mass of names, scrawled by their owners on the glass. It is not of these offerings of fealty one thinks when sitting and musing in that mysterious chamber. It is pleasing when at home, even after long years have intervened between a visit, "to conjure up," as Winter, the American, has eloquently said, "remembrances of that

strange and solemn scene, the sunshine resting its chequered squares upon the ancient floor, the motes swim in the sunbeams, the air is very cold, the place is hushed as death, and over it all there broods an atmosphere of grieved suspense and hopeless desolation—a sense of some tremendous energy stricken dumb and frozen into silence, and past and gone for ever."

In the Henley Street old home are to be seen various objects of interest to the devotee at the shrine of Shakespeare, notably several rare editions of the poet's works, including the two first published in 1623 and 1632. A letter written by Richard Quiney, whose son afterwards was married to Shakespeare's youngest daughter, addressed to "my loving countryman, Mr. Wm. Shakespeare." The burden of the epistle is that the writer stands in need of the kind offices of his friend, and solicits the loan of thirty pounds. There is evidence that this letter was opened, read, and, more than all, had its request complied with, as a charge appears a few weeks later in Quiney's account book of "£30 returned to Mr. Wm. Shakespeare."

Shakespeare's signet ring is an object of great interest, and which would appear to be perhaps the only existing article that belonged to him save Quiney's epistle. It was found near the Stratford Churchyard, and is deemed an undoubted relic. It bears the initials W. S., connected by an ornamental string and tassels, the upper bow presenting a resemblance to the true lover's knot. Haydon, the painter, in a letter dated 1818, about the time of its discovery, said, "My dear Keats, I shall go mad! In a field at Stratford-on-Avon, that belonged to Shakespeare, they have found a gold ring and seal,



with the initials W. S. and a true lover's knot between. If this is not Shakespeare's whose is it? A true lover's knot! I saw an impression to-day, and am to have one as soon as possible; as sure as you live and breathe, and that he was the first of beings, the seal belonged to him. O Lord!"



HAMPTON-IN-ARDEEN CHURCH.

Many of the poet's friends were interred here, but cannot now be traced.

Little doubt can exist that it was Shakespeare's ring and worn by him, and that it is the ring he had lost before his death, and was not to be found when his will was executed, the word *hand* being substituted for *scal* in the original copy of that document. The true lover's knot indicates that it must have been a gift; and may we not with good reason suppose that the "gentle Shakespeare" received it from Sweet Anne Hathaway, she "who had as much virtue as could die." At any rate, we will cherish the romantic conviction.

"It has been said," wrote Douglas Jerrold, "that no legal proof exists of Shakespeare being born in this house; but of what that many venerate is there legal proof? It is indisputable that his father possessed this house in 1552, that William Shakespeare was born in 1564, and that in 1575 it was still in the possession of his father." "Let not our poetic sympathies be measured by the argument of legality. It suffices to know and to feel that the spot was trode by Shakespeare, that 'here he prattled poesy in his nurse's arms'; and more than this, that the associations remain and have not been destroyed. The worldly wise

will tell us sympathies such as these are visionary, that our interest has arisen solely from our own imaginations, or they will cast the purest relic of the poet on one side, because, truly, it does not now appear as in his days. To descend to this destroys whatever that is good and noble it is in the power of association to bestow, for eyes will daily glisten at memorials far more changed from what they were, far less like the great originals. Breathe not a whisper to dissipate the solemn thoughts of such a power—tell us not how changeable are the records of men. If there be one spot in old, in historic

England, sanctified by past associations, it is the cottage where the poet of the world passed his youth, where he wooed and won, and encountered the struggles of early life—the birthplace of William Shakespeare!"

Friend Richard Savage as secretary and librarian, is the *genius loci* here, a kind-hearted man, full of deed and parish register lore, as of all local knowledge bearing on subjects presumed as appertaining to his office. In matters of Parish Registers, he is *facilis princeps*, with amiability under questioning equal to any strain. To say that every year thousands of our American cousins of an inquiring turn of mind, "put him through his facings" with questions such as these only could divine, is to place Richard Savage on a high pinnacle for patience and endurance.



BERKSWELL CHURCH, WARWICK.

Traditioned as having special associations with the poet's youth.



Shakespearean Relics
in
Henley St. Museum.

In the Museum is displayed "the Stratford portrait" of the poet. The painting is supposed to have been owned by the Clifton family, and to have fallen into the hands of William Hunt, an old resident of Stratford, who bought their mansion of the Cliftons in 1758. It is not pretended to have been painted in Shakespeare's time, and the very close resemblance which it bears, in attitude, dress, colours, and other peculiarities to the painted bust in Stratford Church, seems clearly to indicate that its parentage proceeds therefrom. It is now pretty generally admitted that there are really only two authentic representations of Shakespeare in existence—the Droeshout portrait and the Gerard Johnson bust on the chancel wall of Holy Trinity. They may not be perfect works of art, they may not do justice to the originals, but they were seen and accepted by persons to whom Shakespeare had been a living companion. The bust was sanctioned by his children; the portrait, fourteen times copied and engraved within fifty years of his death, was sanctioned by his friend Ben Jonson and by his brother-actors Hemminge and Condell, who prefixed it to the first folio of his works.

Standing amongst the relics which have been gathered into the Henley Street museum, it is well to remember how often "the wish is father to the thought" that sanctifies the uncertain memorials of the distant past. Several of the most suggestive documents bearing upon the vague and shadowy record of Shakespeare's life are preserved in this place. Here is a deed, made in 1596, which proves that this house was his father's residence; also numerous deeds and documents relating to property acquired by the poet, and various writings having reference to himself and his family history. Here is his declaration in a suit in 1604, to recover the price of some malt sold to Philip Rogers. Here is a deed, dated 1609, on which is the autograph of his brother Gilbert, who represented him in Stratford in his business affairs while he was absent in London, and who, surviving, it is dubiously said, almost to the period of the Restoration, talked as a very old man, of the poet's impersonation of Adam in "As You Like It."

On the northern wall of the lower room of this house there used to be, over the chimney, a quaint and curious ancient monument in relief in plaster, bearing date 1606, probably put up at that time, and "possibly," as Ireland says, "by the poet

himself. In 1759 it was repaired and painted in a variety of colours by old Mr. Thomas Harte." Upon the scroll over the figures was inscribed, "Samuel xvii., A.D. 1606"; and round the border, in a continuous line, was this stanza in black letter:—

"Golich comes with sword and spear;
And Babi with a sling;
Although Golich rage and swear,
Down Babi doth him bring.



The sketch of the birthplace, of date 1769, shows it as a large house, the timbers of oak, and the walls filled in with plaster, with dormer windows and gable, a deep porch, the projecting parlour, and bay window. In 1792 the dormer windows and gables had been removed, the bay windows had been transformed into a lattice window of four lights, the porch in front taken away. It was a butcher's shop in the one division and a "public" hostelry in the other. This latter was, in 1820, "improved" by having a new

red-brick casing constructed in place of the timber-framed frontage. The former part ceasing to be used as a pork-butcher's, was set apart for exhibition, and falling into decay, was justly described by Washington Irving as "a small mean-looking edifice." Its walls were whitewashed, and its beams bedaubed with lamp-black. Modern squares of glass had superseded the old leaded diamond panes, while a sign-board, projecting from the front, told that "the immortal Shakespeare was born in this house" (as is seen in view dated 1847). It has since been completely and carefully restored. The greatest nicety has been exercised in the preservation of the various details, and scrupulous care taken in the reconstruction to settle the accuracy of these details, by indications supplied in the original structure, and the restoration is regarded as "the most careful and successful work of the kind ever accomplished."

The timbers of the frame-work have been restored as in the early building, the mortises in the great beam, which extends along the frontage, having been taken as affording guidance, and even the original peg-holes have been used in the mortising. The central window is the genuine old one, and it has been made the model for the others. The pent-house and the dormer windows have been replaced; and while the interior has been strictly preserved in its original state, the exterior has been judiciously brought into its old Elizabethan form.





SHOTTERY.

SWEET ANNE HATHAWAY!

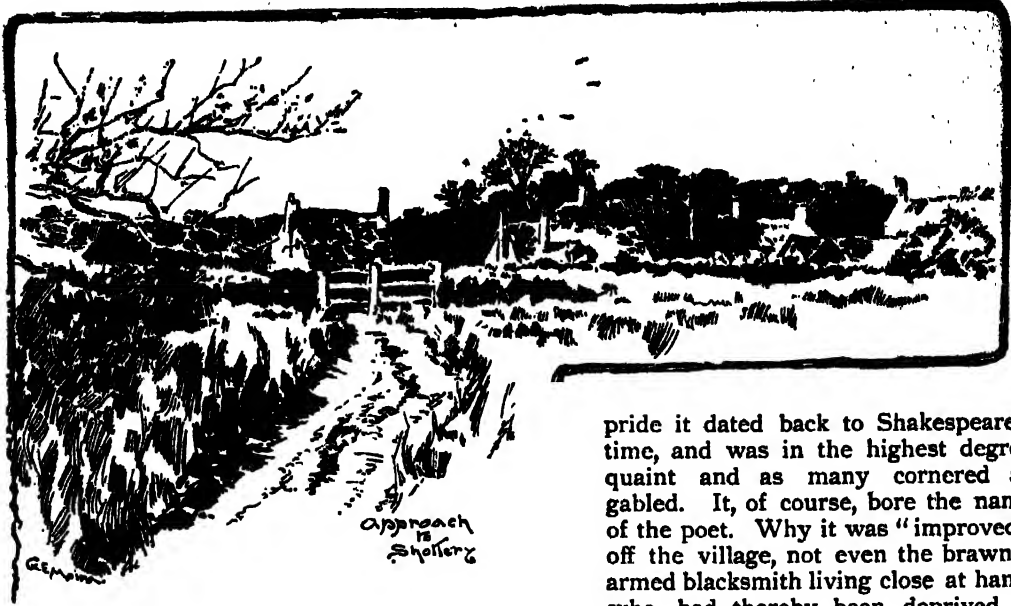
His earliest Muse thus addressed her:—

"If my soul check thee, that I come so near,
Swear to my blind soul that I was thy Will,
And will, thy soul knows, is admitted there:
Thus far for love, my love-suit, sweet, fulfil."



HE birthplace and home of "Sweet Anne Hathaway," the poet's beauteous wife, is within an easy half-hour walk of Stratford, being separated from it only by a few luxurious meadows, in their season gaily be-

dight with wild flowers, and through which a public pathway has existed for ages past. Within the last few years a large slice of these closest to Stratford has been apportioned as allotment gardens for working men, a beneficent change, we may rest assured, which would meet the poet's highest approval were he in the flesh. By the same path the visitor now pursues, did the youthful Shakespeare wend his steps to this spot to visit his passionately-loved village belle. At intervals, when on holiday absences from his literary and theatrical labours, how eagerly would he return to the home of his boyhood, and later on, after his London life, with his wife and children, many would be the delightful sunset strolls across the daisied fields to the cottage of her childhood and of their first love and troth. Doubtless, she was lovely to behold, for we have it on the authority of that "most veracious of antiquarians," Oldys, who tells us that, according to tradition, she was "eminently beautiful," and tradition shall not, in her case, be permitted to err in the assurance. Until our railway days this walk to Shotttery was a thoroughly rural ramble; now modern Stratford presses outwards in this direction, and the shriek of the steam-horse, and the railway approaches, have greatly marred the



former quiet seclusion of the village approach from Stratford. There is much, however, of the beautiful yet left. Pursuing our way across the fields so familiar to Shakespeare in his youthful days, we are quickly in Shuttery, among the extremely picturesque and quaint cottages and farm-buildings now existent—just as in his day. It is a very quaint hamlet of old thatched half-timbered tenements, including the large farmhouse and series of buildings known as Richard Hathaway's cottage, built before Sir Philip Sydney was born, and which remained in his family until within the last half century. The cottages are dotted about in the most picturesque groups, some abutting on the roadside, others by the edge of the stream, with which liberties of diversion have been taken as probably suiting the exigencies of a neighbouring mill, while others are on the brow of the rising ground at the approach to "The Hall." How still and quiet and retired is the whole scene around and about these peculiarly quaint cottages and their surroundings! It is a place for Shakespeare's lovers and none other. We endeavour in our illustrations to portray, in all truthfulness and originality, such cottages as it may be presumed he well knew.

Until within the last twenty years Shuttery could boast of its village inn; tiny to be sure it was, but with exultant

pride it dated back to Shakespeare's time, and was in the highest degree quaint and as many cornered as gabled. It, of course, bore the name of the poet. Why it was "improved" off the village, not even the brawny-armed blacksmith living close at hand, who had thereby been deprived of his unadulterated brown draught, nobody could explain; nevertheless our Shuttery inn, which for centuries afforded rest and cheer to weary pilgrims, is no more, and sad is the reflection. It was a most unpretending hostelry, and, if the story of its life as told by its latest Boniface be true, had, during the interval since Shakespeare tasted its good homebrew, gone through much vicissitude and even occasional subsiding into other uses than travellers' entertainment, the antiquated place ever remaining unaltered until the last fell swoop. A by no means badly-painted head of Shakespeare was suspended by creaking iron hinges from an oaken beam over the door; no landlord's name, nor intimation of cheer of any kind. Was not the face of the *genius loci* ever enough? Memory goes back to its one snuggerly which served as parlour, bar, and general assembly room for all thirsty souls, a quaint, shapeless, many-sided apartment with the usual fireside oak settle, together with high-back chairs, for any "quality folk" who may deign presence. There was much shelving for display of antique earthenware mugs and jugs having symbols of "Speed the Plough" and "Harvest Home," and no lack of blackened hams and sides of bacon arrayed temptingly around. Such was "The Shakespeare" of Shuttery as existent twenty years since, and under whose roof we hugged the conviction that the love-sick swain had smoked many a pipe and emptied many a mug of the pure wholesome brew of mine host.

The dwelling of his early love, his wife, his children's mother, and where he spent his courting days, still exists in all its primitive character. The dear antiquated Hathaway Cottage, situate in the midst of its quiet and luxurious landscape, is on the left-hand side of the road leading from Stratford, dropped, as it were, in a secluded nook, and surrounded by all that is suggestive of Arcadian times. One readily believes it is little changed from what it was in the days of Shakespeare. Proceeding down a pretty devious lane, you cross a murmuring brook; a few yards farther, you enter a thoroughly English rustic wild sort of garden, beyond which, on a gentle elevation, is an orchard, where delicious fruit ripened in the early

is characteristic of Warwickshire cottages. It is exceedingly lovely to Shakespeareans in its oddness. This house, like Shakespeare's birthplace, has been divided into three tenements under the one roof, the central portion being that of the greatest interest. It contains the room which the Hathaways would make their family-room, and which served also the purposes of a kitchen and occasional sitting apartment in which the good folks of the time would take their meals. It has a stone floor, a low ceiling, and a very large fireplace. This is, for a cottage of its pretension, a rather spacious and cheerful apartment, rendered specially cosy by its wide chimney, by the side of which is a cup-



days of his romance. In front of the cottage, near the doorway, is the well, deep and moss-grown, where, by aid of the accustomed bucket, deliciously cool and refreshing draughts are ever ready on the hottest summer day. How many thousands have here slaked thirst, and how increasingly great will the army of devotees yearly become, as time rolls onward, and his words of wisdom and profound knowledge of human life and action shall be more known and appreciated! What a privilege to drink at the same fountain at which he drank from the hand of Sweet Anne! Her home here is a long, low, thatched tenement of timber and plaster, substantially built upon a foundation of squared slabs of lias shale, which

board for salt or bacon, having carved on it the initials I.H.E.H. In such old farmhouses a rude wooden stool was always placed inside the fireplace, which is very broad for burning wood, fagots and split pieces of timber. Who does not, when in this quaintest of homes, picture Sweet Anne here alone sitting on the hereditary fire bench, dreaming of him, her intellectual superior, so far beyond her ken save in the utterances understood of all degrees. Bending over the grey ashes, she could see right up the great broad tunnel of the chimney to the blue sky above, which seemed the more deeply azure, as it does from the bottom of a well. In the evenings, when she looked up, she sometimes saw a star shining above. In the early

mornings of the spring, when her chief kitchen and household duties had been got through, the tiny yellow panes of the window facing the garden and old well had become lit up, and bright with the rays of the risen sun. The walls were wainscotted, but a greater part of the panelling is now removed. Here is the antique carved chair, known as "the courting chair." Alas for its worth as a genuine relic; its predecessor of like ilk passed into a curio collector's hands some eighty years ago, and the present venerable substitute received installation. Altogether, this primitive, picturesque cottage home seems to savour of comfort and homely enjoyment, and indicates that the Hathaways were a well-to-do family in their time. As our American friends say, "Will Shake-

in Anne's day must have been not less wonderful to all beholders. This princess of bedsteads has passed down from Shakespeare's day as associated with Anne, and without any stretch of imagination the visitor will believe that here she came into the world, and that perchance, reclining under the canopy supported by this carved grandeur, she sweetly slept and dreamt of Will. Who would desire to doubt it having been her bridal couch? or how at eventide she sat by the open window to watch his longed-for coming through the pretty lane approach from Stratford. Question these thoughts as we may, they are uppermost in the heart and mind of every Shakespearean resting in this romantic home, so sacred to the memory of the world's greatest writer. Time and lack

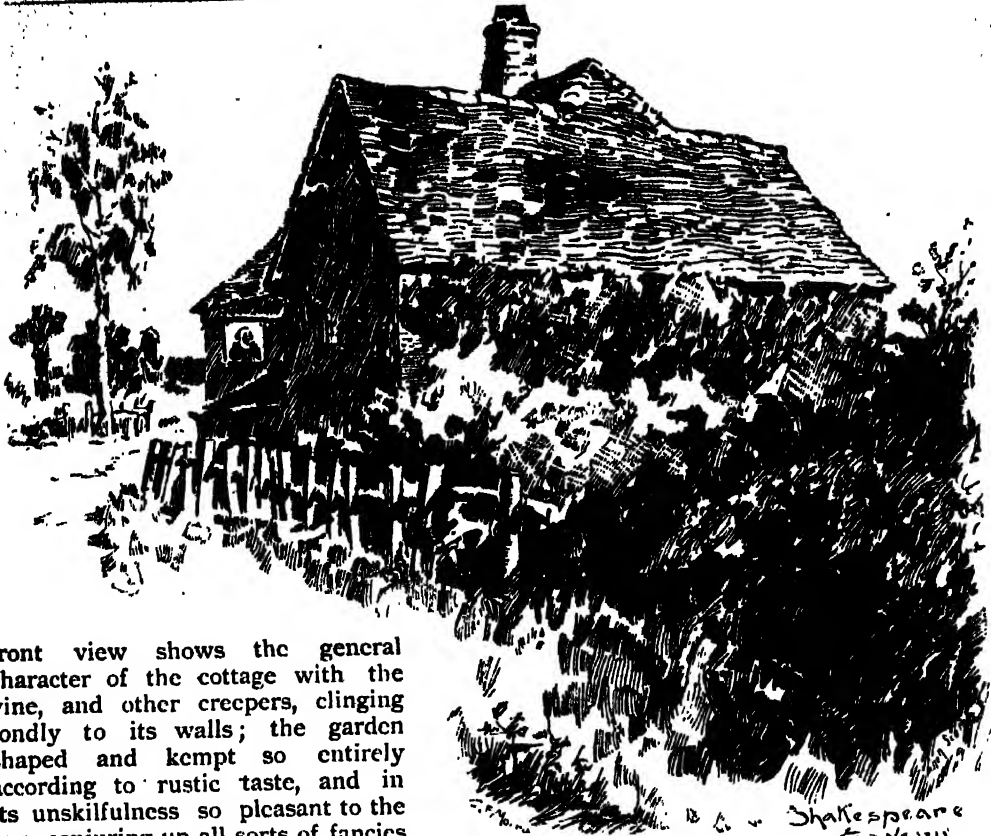


peare must have had a good time of it here with Anne."

Passing out of the dwelling-room, we gain a staircase which conducts to the upper chambers, in the first of which is preserved an ancient four-post bedstead of the Elizabethan day, most elaborately carved, and which unquestionably was the grand bedstead of the reigning members of the Hathaway family, during their several generations. All the rooms, and much of the surroundings of the place, retain their former character; and if the visitor desire to adhere to local faiths, he may, without difficulty, regard as venerable relics many things among its contents. Foremost is this great state couch; it is even in our age of pretension a very marvel of chiseldom, and

of care have wrought their work here, as on the house of the poet's parents, and enhanced their intense interest to the cultivated mind.

It is to be hoped that the cottage and orchard will ere long pass into the hands of the Shakespeare Trustees, to be preserved and cared for as the Henley Street Birth-place and New Place have already been. The Hathaway Cottage is seen to advantage from several points of view. It is charming as beheld when first approached from the roadside. There is another equally good view to be had from the old orchard above, which retains the undulating character of its ancient day. Looked at from behind, we get a thoroughly country aspect of the place; and each of these points of view is placed before our readers in our illustrations. The



front view shows the general character of the cottage with the vine, and other creepers, clinging fondly to its walls; the garden shaped and kempt so entirely according to rustic taste, and in its unskilfulness so pleasant to the eye, conjuring up all sorts of fancies of his saunterings here with his Sweet Anne. Who shall divine the chief subjects revolving in the mighty brain of the myriad-minded as at all seasons he tripped over the sweet meadows from Stratford to Shottery? The freshness of the country, and the profoundness of its quiet, were to him full of happiness. The still walk through the fields, the whole round of the seasons, must have been sources of endless pleasure. When the winter was over and gone, he saw with joy the increased light amongst the breaking clouds and dispersing fogs, the first bursting from the warm southern banks of green, luxuriant plants—the arum, the mercury, the crisp chervil, the wrinkled leaves of the primrose, the sweet violet, white as well as blue, the anemone and the blue-bell, beloved children of the early time, the blossomed branch of the apricot and peach on the sunny wall of the cottage, and the almond in the garden, like a tree of rosy sunshine ere a leaf is yet seen.

There exists a tradition in the neighbourhood that Anne was fond of the

No longer existent

arum, and that when left much to herself she roamed among the hedgerows soon after the birds had paired, and saw the arrow-shaped, pointed leaves with black spots rising and unrolling at the sides of the ditches. He showed her how many of these seemed to die away presently without producing anything, but from some there pushed up a sharply conical sheath, from which emerged the spadix of the arum with its frill. Thrusting his stick into the loose earth of the bank, he showed her the root covered with its thick wrinkled skin. Some of her neighbours, who talked of "yarbs," told her this was poisonous and ought not to be touched—the very reason why in his absence she slipped into the ditch and dug it up. Later on, she found the arum stalks, left alone without leaves, surrounded with berries, some green, some ripening red. This noisome fruit of clustering berries, they told her, was snakes' victuals, and to be avoided. Under his tuition, she knew well where to

B. G. v. Shakespeare
Garden
Shottery.

find the first "crazy berries," whose large yellow flowers do not wait for the sun, but shine when the March wind scatters kings' ransoms o'er the fields.

There have descended from his day stories of calf-love for Anne while yet he was a Stratford school-boy, and that on holidays he scampered over to Shottery and led her up long lanes between high mossy banks, where the little runnels came rushing and chiming along between high overhanging hedges; and through wide, still copses, and across fields deep with greenest grass, bright with sunshine and all the glory of spring; where he would point out to her the nests of birds, the situations

in the open fields and along the sunahiny hedges, in the hedges themselves, all clad in their young leaves, sprinkled with glittering morning dews, and perhaps waving with the utmost prodigality of hawthorn bloom, "sweet



May"! With what earnest delight he would gaze on the bushes of the wild roscbriar and the singular beauty of its finely-cut and emerald green leaves, amongst which the whitethroat framed its gauzy nest. All these, as indeed every of Nature's surroundings, seem to have

been understood by him as man never before had learned, and this even in schoolboy days. When roving with Anne in the fields around Shottery they would hear the ringing notes of the

blackbird and thrush, and watch the skylark soaring aloft into the clear heaven above, pouring forth its notes in uncontrollable joy, such as

"We never can come near."

peculiar to each being well known to him. The robin and the yellowhammer on the bank; blackbirds and throstles in the hedges, or under the roots of some old tree overhanging a stream. He would delight in the depth of rich grass and flowery weeds

As they returned homeward to the cottage, Anne's sweet home, what a paradise of delight was the quaint old garden, full of simple untrimmed beauty—warm, flowery, odorous—happy with the hum of bees in their diligence inspired of spring's first

warmth, and the orchard, so feelingly since described by Coleridge in blank verse—

On some delicious eve
We in our sweet sequestered orchard plots,
Sit on the tree crooked earthward, whose old
boughs
That hang above us in an arborous roof,
Stirred by the faint gale of departing May,
Send their loose blossoms slanting o'er our
heads!

The Hathaways were old residents of the hamlet. Anne's father was a substantial yeoman, quite on a par, in position, with the Shakespeare family. Will, at the time of his marriage with Anne, was only in his nineteenth year; while she had reached the maturer age of twenty-six. In those days, it was deemed most becoming that the chief education of the gentler sex should be in the preparing baked meats,

ciency in ordinary food preparation, fallen upon the demon drink to afford a substitute. Let every girl look upon these domestic duties as necessitous to secure a happy home. Anne deemed it the duty of her life to prepare with her own hands the meals of her household, and was well versed in the cunning of divers savoury meats, and especially of pasties compounded of flesh and fowl, such as she knew would be best appreciated by her Will's palate after a day's hard brain work in the office of the Stratford lawyer,



pies and puddings for their households, the knitting of hose, and if, with these, they could be brought to unite the accomplishment of unripping a coat, turning and remaking to spick and span resemblance of new, they were of all others the most gifted. How many homes in these our days would be made comfortable and happy, had the young matron given heed to the homely duties so well understood and executed by Sweet Anne, instead of devoting so large a share of the few short years intervening between girl and womanhood, to the piano and novel-reading? How many young husbands have, through a wife's utter ineffi-

honoured and blessed by his service, or what is more probable, after toiling in the adaptation of plays to suit the needs of the several companies of actors, his friends and patrons. Anne did not aspire to any of the learning of her Will, but she made amends through stores of domestic arts, soothing to the toil-worn and weary, and therefore so becoming to her sex. Grammar schools existed only for boys of the bettermost families. No doubt there existed at Shrottery a "Dame School," into which was gathered the maidens of below ten years from neighbouring hamlets, and with whom were mixed up boys of tender age, brought to these humble bairns'

seminaries at early hours of morn as much to get them out of way as for any rudimentary instruction. Few girls above eleven years attended these schools. By that time they were presumed to have worked their sampler in capital and small letters, with Christian and surname at foot, and due record of date of execution. This was the finishing stroke in education, all else was superfluous, and, being the bond which kept the youthful fair under school room restraint, was the great goal of aspiration. The sampler once achieved, freedom and home duties and a "Gentle Will" in the distance became the all-in-all. As a handsome, well-made young fellow, hazel-eyed, and auburn-haired, with all his natural gifts, added to the wonted elasticity of spirits and frankness of youth, "Our Will" must have formed a cynosure of attraction to the fair maidens of the neighbourhood.

Not the least interesting and gratifying feature in the present holding of Anne Hathaway's home, is the fact that Mrs. Baker,



a nice good body, who lives in it as the custodian deity, an octogenarian, is herself a descendant of the Hathaways, and was born in the cottage. Her grandmother was a Hathaway, and the last occupant of the home

who bore that name. The property has descended regularly from one generation to another, until Mrs. Baker's unsentimental ancestor broke the chain, and ruthlessly exchanged it for coin. Happily this descendant yet remains in occupation, and we trust she may close up life a contented dweller there; for she is a very pattern showwoman, without a particle of the usual belongings of persons in such office. She allows visitors patiently to indulge their own thoughts and reflections, and enjoy the Shottery nesting-place after their own fashion. We can thus, in visiting Anne Hathaway's Cottage, with its antique surroundings, contemplate it nearly in the same condition as when Shakespeare paid his love visits, whilst the fact of its being still tenanted by a descendant of his wife's father helps wonderfully to realize to visitors its many charming and romantic associations. The road from Trinity Church to Shottery has, since Shakespeare's time, been known only as Love Lane. We all know how he wandered through it, and found a wife at the end of it. Others have, since his time, done the same, notably genial Doctor Collis, formerly Vicar of Stratford, who went a wooing in the same direction, and found a wife in this quiet village.

Anne Hathaway's Cottage may be said to divide with her husband's birthplace in Stratford the homage of Shakespearean pilgrims. There never has been any real doubting as to this cottage: its history has ever stood the test of rigid questioning, chiefly through a Hathaway having always been under its roof through all the generations from Sweet Anne downwards. It has been in the possession of the Hathaways for over three centuries, and as we have seen, even now a descendant in the female line is wife of the tenant, and acts as conductress through the romantic cot so dear to the literary world of numerous ages. It was repaired in 1697 by John Hathaway, and to keep it even in its existing state there must have been many a tinkering since then. All intelligent visitors will, on careful examination, be convinced that whatever changes may have come over it since Shakespeare, the lover of its fair inmate, crossed its threshold, there is much remaining as it was when he paid his wooing visits. Indeed, the whole village of Shottery would seem to be much the same as it must have been at that sunny time in the poet's life, when, after the exit of the schoolboy, he trod the stage of the world as the lover. And the fields through which the footpath leads, the

hedges, the stiles, and the every aspect of the place, are, perhaps, but little altered from what they were three centuries ago.

An old rhythmical pun on the name of Anne Hathaway has for generations past excited much disputation. It is one of the



best of this kind of composition, and is claimed as having been addressed by Shakespeare to his loved Anne of Shotttery. The over-critical deny his hand in the composition, but this by no means proves that it did not emanate from his love-sick brain. That he had a disposition to write such verses may be reasonably concluded from a passage in "Love's Labour Lost," in which he says:—

"Never durst poet teach a pen to write,
Until his ink were tempered with love's sighs."

The lines, whether written by Shakespeare or not, exhibit a clever play upon words, and are inscribed:—

TO THE IDOL OF MY EYE AND DELIGHT OF MY
HEART, ANN HATHAWAY.

Would ye be taught, ye feathered throng,
With love's sweet notes to grace your song,
To pierce the heart with thrilling lay:
Listen to mine Ann Hathaway.
She hath a way to sing so clear,
Phœbus might wondering stop to hear.

To melt the sad, make blithe the gay,
And Nature charm, Ann hath a way.

She hath a way,
Ann Hathaway;
To breathe delight, Ann hath a way.

When envy's breath and rancorous tooth
Do soil and bite fair worth and truth,
And merit to distress betray:
To soothe the heart, Ann hath a way.
She hath a way to chase despair,
To heal all grief, to cure all care,
Turn foulest night to fairest day:
Thou know'st, fond heart, Ann hath a way.

She hath a way,
Ann Hathaway;
To make grief bliss, Ann hath a way.

Talk not of gems, the orient list,
The diamond, topaze, amethyst,
The emerald mild, the ruby gay;
Talk of my gem, Ann Hathaway!
She hath a way, with her bright eye,
Their various lustre to defy,—
The jewels she, and the foil they,
So sweet to look, Ann hath a way.

She hath a way,
Ann Hathaway;
To shame bright gems, Ann hath a way.

But were it to my fancy given
To rate her charms, I'd call them heaven;
For though a mortal made of clay,
Angels must love Ann Hathaway.
She hath a way so to control,
To rapture the imprisoned soul,
And sweetest heaven on earth display,
That to be heaven Ann hath a way.

She hath a way,
Ann Hathaway;
To be heaven's self, Ann hath a way!

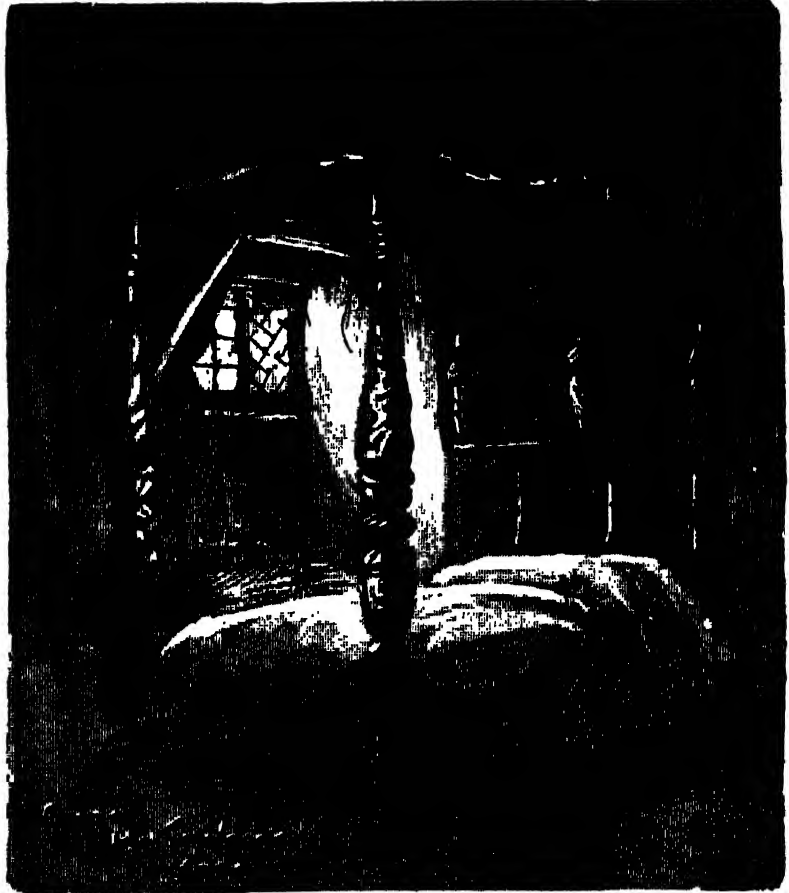
What can equal the gifted American writer Winter's loving reference to Shotttery, Shakespeare and Anne, in the early youth of "Harper's Magazine":—"Over the meadows to Shotttery where Anne Hathaway lived, within a mile of Stratford, and in sight of the slender spire that marks the sepulchre of him she loved. Hasten to the edge of the town towards the railway station, turn to the left and pass through one of those English country gates that swings in a loop of the fence, so that you have to make two decisive efforts before you are actually through it. There I touched grass and mellow soil, and heard a thrush sing in a hawthorn hedge, and was at once a-field and well on my way to Shotttery. On either hand the meadows were moist and green, there were scattered clusters of tall trees that looked like wirework, for not a vestige of a leaf was left to them. Now and then a cottage came in view—a low rambling sort of cottage, with a thatched roof; you might call it a cottage under a haystack, with the smallest possible window or two bursting through

the roof and making a kind of shaggy gable for itself and a pretty picture for any searching eye that might happen to discover its hiding-place—a most comfortable home-like cottage, that seemed to have spread its walls as a hen its wings, so as to accommodate the brood that seeks shelter there. Crossing the railroad in the midst of one of the meadows, I came to a land of peace, where sheep were munching young grass, up to their eyes in wool. They munched and munched, and stared with their blank, shallow, button-like eyes that seemed to be sewed into their ridiculous faces, all the while standing so still it seemed as if their stilt-like legs must have been driven a little way into the sod. There is a long path over the meadow—one cannot help following it with some cheerfulness, for unnumbered pilgrims have beaten it down with much passing to and fro, and, before many steps, Stratford is forgotten, and there is nothing left in all the world so dear as the short sweet grass, the browsing sheep, the hedges, and the song-birds. Compassed about with limitless green sward, the trees, whose bark was black with rain, and more of those bland-faced sheep, I heard a voice that was as a new interpretation of Nature—a piping, reed-like voice, that seemed to be played upon by summer

winds, a rushing rivulet of song fed from a ceaseless fountain of melodious joy. I looked for the singer whose contagious rhapsody was rapidly according all Nature to its theme! It was not of the earth: those golden notes seemed to shower out of the sky like sunbeams; yet I saw no bird in

the blank blue above me. If bird it were, it was invisible, and that voice was the sole evidence of its corporeal life. Such fingering of delicate stops and vantages, such rippling passages as compassed the gamut of bird ballads—vague and variable as a symphony of river reeds breathed into by soft gales—such fine-spun threads of silken song; and then a gush of wild, delirious music—why did not that bird heart break and the warm bundle of feathers drop back to earth, while the soul that had burst from its fleshly cage lived on for ever, a disembodied song?

"Hark! the lark at heaven's gate sings."



New until the break of day,
Through this house each fairy stray.

To the best bride bed will we,
Which by us shall blessed be."
—*Midsummer Night's Dream*, act v, sc. ii.

Ah, how he sung! tipsy with sunshine and sweet air, while the world was reeling below him, and the little worldlings were listening to his canticle with dumb wonderment. I found him at last, away up toward the planets, seeming the merest leaf afloat upon the invisible currents of the air. He was

never at rest. It was not enough that his madrigal had revealed a new joy in life to one listener at least; he must needs pant upon the waves of the air like a strong swimmer, crying out in an ecstasy. He drifted for a moment, and graciously descended toward the earth; but his rapture was not yet ended, for he again aspired, and grew smaller than any leaf, and I saw nothing but a mote panting upon the bosom of a cloud, and heard nothing but a still small voice coming down to me out of the high heaven of its triumph.

Behind me lay fields that stretched back to Stratford; before me lay other fields that reached forth and kissed the hem of the garments of Shottery, albeit Shottery is a half nude place, a mere handful of houses mostly old, each looking so like the house in the very next garden that I was utterly unable to say which of the several was the home where Anne was courted of Will, when Will had grown weary of courting other maids, they say. It is not unpleasant to stumble upon the shrine for love of which you have crossed the seas; in truth this plan pleases me more than to have some gabbling guide seize me by the bridle and lead me to the climax without warning and without reserve. I had made the circuit of the solitary winding street that is the sum total of Shottery village, and though I had fixed upon half-a-dozen nest-like cottages, in either of which Anne might have felt at home, I was forced to ask at a smithy for the path to Anne's. The smith, grimy of face, but clean of spirit, if his voice was honest—the smith was beating a hot iron that spat fire at every blow. He left the re-

sounding anvil, and seeing one of the village belles with a great bundle of something a-top of her young head, said he, "Follow that maid, master, and you will pass Anne's gate." I followed, and passed it as directed. There was a brace of cottages with gardens athwart

them, and the muddy road running in front of the two; of these I chose the one that seemed least interesting; for why should a cot having an immortal history care to look well? Is it not enough that its chamber is a shrine, and that so long as it hangs together it will be revered of men? Therefore I chose the poorer of the two, and neither was much to boast of. A child answered my rap at the door. Was it Anne's cottage, to be sure? No; but Anne's cottage was adjoining. Enough that I had at last brought the focus of my drives to bear upon truth; so, a copper or two for the child, whose life-long regret it must be that she was born next

door to Anne's and not on the veritable premises.

A wicket hung loosely under the shadow of a thorn; a line of uneven flagstones led through the garden, and I had scarcely set foot upon them when a dame, whose face was a kind of welcome, and whose modest and antique attire was a warrant of her right to do the honours of the place, appeared at the cottage door, paused there a moment to drop a curtsy that was like a cue from the Elizabethan drama, and I was at once at home. There was a small well or spring to the left of the path, with smooth flat stones about it, and many a thriving shrub seeking to do justice to the garden even in mid January. All this beguiled me. What more



THE GREAT BED OF WARE.

See "*Twelfth Night*," act 3, sc. ii.

When Sir Toby Belch urges Aguecheek to pen a challenge to his supposed rival, he tells him to put as many lies in a sheet as will lie in it, "although the sheet were big enough for the bed of Ware in England." The bed was the wonder of Shakespeare's age, and still exists in Ware. It was carved in Elizabeth's reign.

could I do than be grateful and enter, since the dame had cordially bidden me? Stone steps, a half-dozen of them, led to the door; within was a small hall or entry, floored with flags and suggestive of nothing but winter apples and garden tools. Out of this entry a door admitted us to the main room of the cottage, also paved with well-washed, well-worn, and fragmentary flagstones. This was the best room in Anne's cottage, and here I put off the old world and the new world, and went back into the past, like one who has been long seeking some mode of egress and is overcome with resignation when he finds himself at the very threshold of his desires, and a welcome guest withal. There was but one thought in my mind now. I

like an ideal smoke-house, and sat in the corner where Will used to sit when Anne was young and he was younger. Somehow, it all seemed like a dream; the dark walls of the chimney, the low beam that I ran against two or three times before I learned to duck under it as I passed from the chimney-place into the room and back to the chimney-place again, in a kind of aimless pilgrimage that was a source of deep and inexpressible gratification to me. I was taking in the spirit of the surroundings, and by degrees growing in grace.

On the left of the fire hung a net of small, shiny onions; two or three hams, shrouded in white, were strung up in the dark of the chimney almost out of reach; the poker and tongs stood with their heads together in close



had found the golden key to the mystery of a life that has ever seemed to me more like a fable than a reality, and it was for me to lay hold on it at once and be satisfied, or ever after hold my peace.

Could I stop all night? for it was toward twilight when I entered—might I eat here and sleep here, and on the morrow go out into the world again, richer for my experience? Yes, I could, if I would accept of the very humble fare of the dame and her master—such fare, she assured me, as I had not been used to, though I knew not what spirit had revealed to her the state of my case, and I cared not. I hung my cap on a peg in the hall, went into the great chimney that was

confidence; and back of them was a cupboard, within which the goodies in Anne's time were stored. On the opposite side of the fire was a stock of kindlings, crowned with a basket of knitting work; overhead was a flying bridge of towels and woollen socks, each article in a comfortable lukewarm condition. The smoke floated past these signals of domestic peace and coiled up the great chimney passage, growing bluer and bluer, and more and more spiritualized, until it blended with the blue sky itself, plainly visible through the uncovered mouth of the chimney. An atmosphere of unutterable calm brooded over the place. It began in the bed of coals under the sooty kettle that hung by a

chain to the guy pole in the chimney; it filled that serene nook and swept into the low-roofed room. Sprigs of Christmas holly, with the red berries just beginning to shrivel, were thrust into the leaden casement of the small window panes; a bird in a willow cage hopped from perch to perch, as patient and persistent as the long pendulum of a coffin-like clock that stood next the chamber door. In fact, it was difficult to say whether the bird was timing the pendulum or the pendulum magnetizing the bird, for both bird and pendulum swung to and fro with amazing deliberation, and ticked harmoniously for hours together.

I examined the blue china that was displayed to the utmost extent on the dresser, and counted a row of small mugs, all of a pattern, that hung the length of a big beam overhead. I watched two copper-coloured pumpkins saved for seed in the midst of the

When I had come thus far in my tour of inspection, I was quite in the mood to withdraw into my high-back chair, and dream over the coals that flushed and scurled when a shadow passed over them, but flushed again as the soft air fanned them in the hollow of the cavernous chimney. Suddenly there was a small roar of waters within the kettle; a cloud of steam gushed out of its crooked spout; a few drops of rain leaped in at the open mouth of the chimney and spat on the coals with a short, sharp hiss; the old dame hastened from some undiscovered corner where she had been very silent and very busy, and supper was speedily under way. I remember no meal more enjoyable than was this: rashers of bacon fried over the coals, thick slices of bread toasted and spread with lard spiced with rosemary and salt, and tea sipped from the blue cups that were so marked an ornament to the dresser.

You see the dame's great-grandmother was a Hathaway, and the dame's master married her out of this cottage on nine shillings a-week. But



congregation of mugs. There was a bunch of lavender on one wall, the only one, dating back to Waterloo;—and,—well, just here a curtain was drawn across part of the room, to keep the strong draught from sweeping every member of the family up the chimney, and to make the chimney-corner seem rather more like a shrine, I fancy, or it surely had that effect. This dark curtain hung just back of the settle whereon Will and Anne made love.

times are easier now, bless God! and many a liberal sixpence is dropped into the hand of the good woman by pilgrims from the very ends of the earth.

After supper two clay pipes added their aromatic fumes to the thin blue clouds that scaled the chimney, and meanwhile the

motherly soul was tidying the room and making ominous movements with a



warming pan, such as it had been my privilege to read of, but never to see

until this hour. The bed I was to sleep in must needs be aired, as it is not slept in save when the wandering son comes home to Shottery twice in the year. All the story was gradually revealed to me between whiffs of tolerable tobacco and the renewal of the coals in the warming pan. I listened to the easy drone of the cottager, who sat opposite to me near the chimney,

the very picture of contentment, and to the unsteady steps of the housewife, who was preparing my bed for the night. The bird had stopped vibrating between his perches, the old clock, with a face like a harvest moon, was ticking to itself as softly as possible, as though it felt we had lost interest in its affairs, and it was not expected to tick with much decision any more that night. To bed at last in the little chamber next Anne's room. I had already seen her stately couch, on which so many eyes have looked. I saw it by daylight, when the great head-board with its heavy carvings, and the tall posts, which are beginning to tell a little under the weight of the ponderous wooden canopy, seemed worthy of some reverence; but at night, by the dim light of an exceedingly slender taper, it positively looked to me like some curious sarcophagus with mummies standing in a row over the pillow, and probably a handful of dust and ashes hidden away under the quilt. One glance was enough for me now. The dame said, "Good night, and sleep well," as she passed down the creaking stairs, and I closed the small door and shut Anne's room from mine.

There was a low murmur of voices in the room under me. I heard it while I lay in bed. Then there was a sound of sliding bolts and retreating steps, and then an inner door closed after the kind creatures under whose roof I had found shelter, and all was still. I thought I heard the clock tick once or twice, but was not quite sure of it; a bird started suddenly out of the thatch by my window, and gave me a little fright, for the cottage had grown ghostly in the darkness; a mouse skipped across a corner of the room. I buried my face in the pillow, full of vague fancies, and presently slept the sleep that had compassed all Shottery with its profound and tranquil spell.

It was far in the night when I woke. Someone may have touched me, for I started out of a dream into wide wakefulness. Of course, I questioned the cause of my broken

rest, and listened with suspicious ears for conclusive evidence. The cottage was very still, yet there was a sense of life and motion in it, and I heard, or thought I heard, someone moving uneasily about, and drawing, now and again, a long breath, not unlike a sigh. I listened attentively! The floor of the next room creaked as though someone were opening it; there was no audible sound of falling feet, but only the creaking of the boards under the weight of somebody moving softly about. I knew that the good people slept in the room below, and that the upper

lighted by the moon, that also shone in at my window, tracing the outlines of nine panes of glass within a sash but eighteen inches square, on the edge of my bed. I saw Anne's window open and a print that was almost colourless in the faint light, and then a shadowy figure passed between me and it, and leaned on the window-sill. It was a woman's form, clad in white—a nun-like figure, that might not have done discredit to Beatrice in her prison cell. The figure turned from the casement and passed from view. I heard a sigh that was born of mid-



chambers were untenanted, save by myself—unless the truant son had come home unexpectedly and quite out of season, since his return was not looked for under seven weeks. I do not take kindly to mysteries, even in so wholesome a village as Shottery, and I rose with as much caution as is commendable with a detective, to listen at the door between my room and Anne's. Surely someone was pacing the floor restlessly, and almost noiselessly, for someone I surely heard, and, with that conviction, I looked to the worn hole through which the latch-string was passed. I saw a part of the chamber, dimly

summer passion, and had nothing in common with the season, the leafless trees, and the crisp frozen ruts in the road over which I had come to Shottery. I looked from my window. It was still winter—the English winter that seems ever ready to become spring, and is never very wintry even when it is put to its mettle. Anne's room was more like summer. At her lattice the woodbine rustled its leaves, glossed with dew, the moonlight was warm and mellow, and a bird's shadow fluttered for a moment in the shadowy lattice set like a mosaic in her floor. There was a light step in the path, and some-

thing like a quail's whistle broke the silence; a tuft of leaves hung for seed in the casement, fell upon the floor. "There's rosemary, that's for remembrance; pray you, love, remember."

Instantly, the misty form I had first seen

is borne in every breast and told in every heart-beat. I dared not listen. I dared not watch. The prodigal maid stood with her bosom half shrouded in woodbine, while the moon looked chastely down upon her unmasked beauty. He worshipped in the path



Dibs of
Old Farm
Buildings
Sheltering

sped toward the token, lifted it to her lips, and glanced shyly forth. Then followed the eternal rhapsody of youth—voices tempered with love and deepened with desire; cooing dove-voices, scarcely audible, but easily understood, for the counterpart of that story

below, and toyed with the clambering vine that had borne no blossom so fair as she who now smiled down upon him, like Flora in her native bower. She plucked a leaf and threw it to him laden with kisses. How much of this sweet folly gave joy to those hearts I know not; I only know that, after many fond farewells, the light step was heard in the path again; the pebbles crunched under a foot that was elastic and bounding; the echo of this retreating step died away,

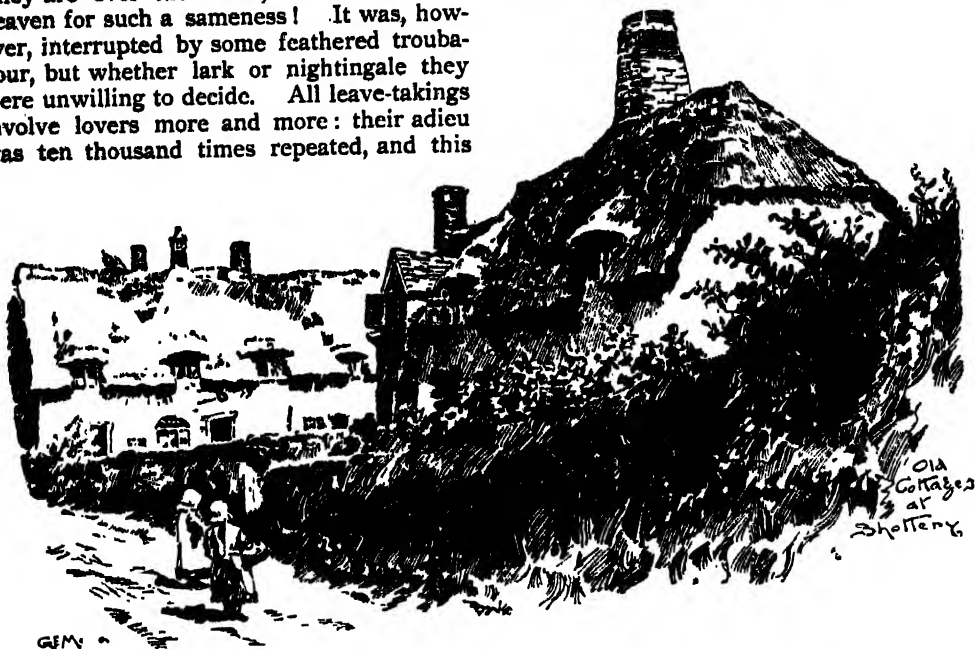
followed by a silence that was profound, for even the ghost at the lattice gave no token of her presence. But those wayward feet returned speedily. They must have hastened down the lonesome road a few paces, faltered, paused for a moment, and then

sought the woodbine lattice with a new impulse that was fatal to peace of spirit, for it but added fuel to love's consuming fire.

The second scene was like unto the first. They are ever the same; and let us thank heaven for such a sameness! It was, however, interrupted by some feathered troubadour, but whether lark or nightingale they were unwilling to decide. All leave-takings involve lovers more and more: their adieu was ten thousand times repeated, and this

it were the damning evidence of something, but what, I scarcely dared to question.

The air was chill, a row of frost-white dew-drops hung upon clipped edges of the thatch above the window; the bed itself was undis-



was but the beginning of the end. "Parting is such sweet sorrow," you know, and I know, and no one knew it better than he who first said it.

"Oh happy fair!
Your eyes are lode-stars; and your tongues sweet
air,
More tuneable than lark to shepherd's ear,
When wheat is green, when hawthorn buds
appear."

It was a vision of shadows, more real to me than any fleshly love, of whose shadowiness I am, perhaps, too conscious; but "it faded on the crowing of the cock," a shrill cock that crew long and loud in the early grey of the morning, and was followed by an immediate dissolution of certain elements, and a sound as of some falling body that fetched a sigh such as heralds the departure of a disembodied spirit.

I rushed into Anne's chamber. All the delicious summer warmth was gone; the moon had sailed over the roof; a bird had fluttered out of the window; and, by the dull light of the early morning, I saw that a garment that I feel sure was hanging over the arm of the chair the night previous had slipped to the floor and lay there as though

turbed, yet it looked as though it might tell something if it only chose to. Even the quaint carved mummies that watched above the smooth pillow looked grim and ironical. I retreated to my own room, and again invited the spirit of forgetfulness. My eyes grew dry and peppery, my eyelids thickened, it was much easier to let them fall of their own weight than to try to watch the morning. At intervals I slid off into unconsciousness, often awakening with a new experience to find the daylight brighter and the bird voices more jubilant. These momentary snaps were most consoling, and at each lucid interval I rejoiced as definitely as a drowsy man is able to, and thanked heaven for the brief, swift morning dreams which are the beatitudes of sleep. After that a cracking of coals in the great chimney, a sound as of a small round table being pushed toward the fire, the clatter of dishes and all the welcome premonitions of breakfast—these summoned me below.

I wonder what instinct it is that prompts a man who has known the best of travel to turn his back upon the prospect that delights him most, before it has grown in the least commonplace. I shouldered my valise

after the morning meal, was followed to the wicket by the dame and the master, and with a hand in the hand of each, said my farewell. There was a "morning lark" to "paint the meadows with delight"; a black cloud of hoarse-throated rooks swept over a grove in the edge of the field. The sunshine seemed fairer than common, the air fresher and sweeter. It may be that the thought of tracking Will's footsteps through those delicious meadows gave me a keener joy in Nature, and a closer communion with her; but I think it more than likely that the good souls over in Anne's cottage, who had given me welcome and God-speed with the colour of truth brightening and dignifying their honest faces, had as much to do with my increased spirituality as anything, for I had come away with a firm belief in the identity

beautiful appearance. The white clover turf under foot is soft as velvet, men are reaping in the fields past us with their sickles. Having walked about a mile, we come to a lane turning to the left, and a guide-post pointing to "Shottery." I see the village and the old cottage covered with roses and fragrant-flowering vines, which make the air delicious. By the gates is the largest Noisette rose I ever saw, its shoots reaching more than twelve feet, and terminated with clusters of buds and open roses, each cluster having over fifty buds. William Shakespeare when eighteen years old as he was, had no need to inquire his way hither. What were the thoughts of such a mind drawing near to the place which now peeps out from the trees across these fields? What were the feelings of a soul which



of the bard and his bride which a visit to his birthplace and sepulchre had failed to inspire me with; and it was good to find such gentle souls holding ward over the Shottery shrine, where the flower of Will's glorious youth was perfected, and whither, let us trust, he oft repaired for reverie, and to contemplate in that summer garden the mellowing harvest of his later years.

Who has discoursed with such loving enthusiasm on Shottery as Ward Beecher, the eloquent American author, with whom personally the writer has had much happy intercourse? He says:—

Emerging from the village, we take the level road, lined on either side with hedges; the trees, trees not with naked stems, but ruffled from the hedge to their limbs with short-side brush, which gives them a very

created such forms of love in after days? I look upon the clouds every moment changing forms, upon the hedges or trees, along which, or such like, Shakespeare wandered, with his sweet Anne, and marvel what were the imaginations, the strifes of heart, the gushes of tenderness, the sanguine hopes and forepaintings of this young poet's soul. For, even so early, he had begun to give form to that which God created in him. One cannot help thinking of Olivia, Juliet, Desdemona, Beatrice, Ophelia, Imogen, Isabella, Miranda; and wondering whether any of his first dreams were afterwards borrowed to form these. It is not possible but that strokes of his pencil in these and other women of Shakespeare, reproduced some features of his own experience. Well, I imagine that Anne was a little below the medium height,

delicately formed and shaped, but not slender, with a clear, smooth forehead, not high, but wide and evenly filled out; an eye that chose to look down mostly, but filled with sweet confusion every time she looked up, and that was used more than her tongue; a face that smiled oftener than it laughed, but so smiled that one saw a world of brightness within, as of a lamp hidden behind an alabaster shade; a carriage that was deliberate, but graceful and elastic. This is *my* Anne Hathaway. Whether it was Shakespeare's, I find nothing in this cottage and these trees and verdant hedges to tell me. The birds are singing something about it—descendants doubtless of the very birds that the lovers heard, strolling together; but I doubt their traditionary lore. I did not care to go in. There are two or three tenements in the long cottage as it now stands; but the middle one is that to which pilgrims from all the world do come; and though it was but a common yeoman's home, and his daughter has left not a single record of herself, she and her home are immortal, because hither came the lad Shakespeare, and she became his wife. I leaned upon this hedge yesterday afternoon, it being the Sabbath, and looked long at the place, and with more feelings than thoughts, or rather with thoughts that dissolved at once into feelings. Here are the rudest cottages; scenery, beautiful indeed, but not more so than thousands of other places; but men of all nations and of every condition, the mingled multitude of refined men, are thronging hither, and dwell on every spot with enthusiasm unfeigned. Whatever Shakespeare saw, we long to see; what he thought of, we wish to think of; where he walked, thither we turn our steps. The Avon, the church, the meadows lying over beyond both; the street and the room where he was born;—all have a soul imbreathed upon them, all of them are sacred to us, and we pass as in a dream amid these things. The sun, the clouds, the trees, the birds, the morning and evening, moonlight or twilight or darkness, none of them here have a nature of their own; all of them

are to us but memorials or suggestions of Shakespeare.

God gave to man this power to breathe himself upon the world; and God gave us that nature by which we feel the inspiration. Is this divine arrangement exhausted in



OLD KITCHEN AT SHOTTERY.

man's earthly history? Are we not to see and to know a sublime development of it when we come to a knowledge of God himself, face to face? Then, not a hamlet alone, a few cottages, a stream or spire will be suggestive; but throughout the universe every creature and every object will breathe of God. Not of His *genius*, as Stratford-on-Avon speaks of Shakespeare; but of every trait of character, every shade of feeling, every attribute of power, of goodness, love, mercy and gentleness, magnanimity, exquisite purity, taste, imagination, truth, and justice. May we know this revelation, walk amid those scenes of glory, and know the rapture of feeling God effulge upon us from everything which His heart has conceived, or



His hand fashioned! But chiefly may we see that noontide glory when we shall gaze unabashed upon His unobstructed face.

The late William Howitt leaves us a charming account of a visit to Shottery:—The birth-place and the marriage-place of Anne Hathaway is just as it was; and, excepting the tombs of Shakespeare and herself, the only authentic and unchanged traces of their existence here. I therefore hastened away to Shottery, the very first moment I could get out of the inn. It is but a short walk to it, across some pleasant meadows, and I pleased myself with thinking, as I strode along, with what delight Shakespeare, in his youth, trod the same path, on his way to see his fair Anne Hathaway; and how often in his latter years, when he had renounced public life, and she was his “all the

world,” they might led by the sweet recollections of the past, often stroll that way together, and, perhaps, visit some of their kindred under the same rustic roof.

The village is a real rustic village indeed, consisting of a few farm-houses, and of half-timbered cottages of the most primitive construction, standing apart one from the other, in their old gardens and orchards. Nothing can exceed the simplicity and quiet of this rustic hamlet. It is the *beau ideal* of Goldsmith's Auburn. The village public-house is the “Shakespeare Tavern,” a mere cottage, like the rest. No modern innovations, no improvements, seem to have come hither to disturb the image of the past times. The cottages stand apart from each other, in their gardens and orchard-crofts, and are just what the poets delight to describe. The country around is pleasant, though not very striking. Its great charm is its perfect rurality. Anne Hathaway's cottage stands at the farther end of this scattered and secluded hamlet, at the feet of pleasant uplands, and from its rustic casements you catch glimpses of the fine breezy ranges of the Ilmington

and Meon Hills, some miles southward; and of Stratford church spire eastward, peeping over the trees.

The cottage is a long tenement, of the most primitive character; of timber framing, filled up with brick and plaster work. Its doors are grey with age, and have the old-fashioned wooden latches, with a bit of wood nailed on the outside of the door, to take hold of while you pull the string; just such a latch as, no doubt, was on the door of Little Red Riding Hood's grandmother, when the wolf said to the little girl, “Pull the string, and you'll get in.”

The antiquity of the house is testified by the heads of the wooden pins, which fasten the framing, standing up some inches from the walls, according to the rude fashion of the age, never having been cut off. The end of

the cottage comes to the village road; and the side which looks into the orchard is covered with vines, and roses, and rosemary. The orchard is a spot all knolls and hollows, where you might imagine the poet, when he came there a-wooing, or in the afterdays of his renown, when he came hither to see his wife's friends, and to indulge in day-dreams of the past, as he represents the King of Denmark,

"Sleeping within mine orchard,
My custom always of the afternoon,"

lying on the mossy turf, and enjoying the pleasant sunshine and the flickering shadows of the old apple-tree. The orchard extends up the slope a good way, then you come to the cottage garden, and then to another orchard. You walk up a little narrow path,

In the "Midsummer Night's Dream," Titania tells the fairies to be kind to Bottom:—

"Be kind and courteous to this gentleman;
Hop in his walks, and gambol in his eyes;
Feed him with apricocks and dewberries,
With purple grapes, green figs, and mulberries;
The honey-bags steal from the humble bees," &c.

These same dewberries have cost the ex-pounders of his text a world of trouble. As apricots, grapes, and figs are very good things, they could not bring their fancies to believe that the fairies would feed Bottom on aught less dainty, even though he yearned hungrily after good oats and a bundle of hay. All kinds of fruit were run over in the scale of delicacies, and not finding any of the fine sorts which ever bore the name of dewberry, they at last sagely concluded that it must



No longer existent.

between hedges of box, and amongst long grass. All the homely herbs and flowers which grow about the real old English cottage, and which Shakespeare delighted to introduce into his poetry—the rosemary, celandine, honeysuckle, marigold, mint, thyme, rue, sage, etc., meet your eye as you proceed.

The commentators of Shakespeare have puzzled themselves wonderfully about some of the plainest matters of his text, and about none more than the identity of the dewberry.

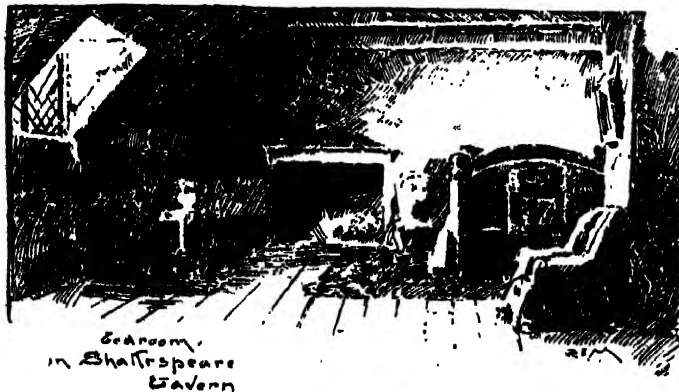
be a gooseberry, because the gooseberry is only once mentioned as a gooseberry in all his dramas. A wise conclusion! What a pity that those laborious and ingenious commentators would not step occasionally out of their studies, and go into Shakespeare's own neighbourhood and hear the peasantry there talk. They would have not only long ago discovered what a dewberry is, but have heard many a phrase and proverb, that would have thrown more light on the text of Shakespeare,

than will ever stream in through a library window in half a century. A dewberry is a species of blackberry, but of a larger grain, of a finer acid, and having upon it a purple bloom, like the violet plum. It is a fruit well known by that name to botanists (*rubus coccineus*), and by that name it has always been well known by the common people in the midland counties. As I walked round the orchard of Anne Hathaway, I was quite amused to see it growing plentifully on the banks; and taking up a sprig of it, with some berries on it, I asked almost every countryman and every countrywoman whom I met during the day, what they called that fruit. In every instance they at once replied "the dewberry." While I was in that neighbourhood, I repeatedly asked the peasantry if they knew such a thing as a dewberry. In every case they replied, "To be sure; it is like a blackberry, only its grains are larger, and it is more like a mulberry." A very good description. "Yes," said others, "it grows low on the banks; it grows plentifully all about this country." So much for all the critical nonsense about the dewberry. I could not avoid noticing many such little touches of natural imagery with which Shakespeare has enriched the poetical portion of his text, as I strolled about this garden and orchard. In the "Midsummer Night's Dream," act iv., Shakespeare says:—

"The female ivy so
Enrings the barked fingers of the elm."

Why the *barked* fingers of the elm? Because the young shoots of the elm and those of the maple cover themselves with a singu-

lar corky bark, which rises in longitudinal ridges, of frequently more than a quarter of an inch high, and presenting a very singular appearance. It is a curious fact that the elm is the great natural growth of the country about Stratford, and must have been particularly familiar to Shakespeare's eye, and in this very orchard he must have seen plenty of the very images he has used. I pleased myself with imagining the quiet happiness which he had enjoyed with his Anne Hathaway in this very spot, while these rural images and happy illustrations silently flowed into his mind from the things around him. There was an old arbour of box, the trees of which had grown high and wild, having a whole wilderness of periwinkle at their feet; and upon the wooden end of a shed forming one side of this arbour grew a honeysuckle, which seemed as though it might have grown in the very days of Shakespeare, for it had all the character of a very old tree; little of it showing any life, and its bark hanging from its stem in filaments of more than a foot long, like the tatters and beard of an ancient beggar. At the door looking into this orchard is a sort of raised platform, up three or four steps, with a seat upon it, so that the cottagers might sit and enjoy at once the breeze and the prospect of the orchard and fields beyond. There is a passage right through the house, with a very old high-backed bench of oak in it, said to have been there in Shakespeare's time, and old enough to have been there long before. The whole of the interior is equally simple and rustic.



No longer existent.



SHAKESPEARE AND ANNE HATHAWAY AND SHOTTERY.



SHAKESPEARE'S biography is handed down to us through the rural scenes around Stratford. The impress on our great author's writings is that of one born to the country and living in it; his works afford evidence in a remarkable degree of his intimate acquaintance with country life, and force a conviction that, in his early days, he dwelt mostly in the neighbourhood of Stratford-upon-Avon, in and among the scenes which were so deeply impressed upon his memory as to afford a constant and copious source of poetical imagery. His family connections were, at least in part, agricultural; and whether, during his education in the Grammar School at Stratford, he lived partly in the town and partly with his relatives in the neighbourhood, his works show that he



ANNE HATHAWAY'S COTTAGE (BACK VIEW).

must have passed much of his time, as a boy, in the country itself. There are such abundant expressions, allusions, and similes so essentially rural, that they could hardly have been used by any writer not of country growth, and can be fully understood only by those who have been brought up in the country itself. The frequent introduction of passages peculiarly rural, shows such a deep insight into country customs and pursuits, such an intimate knowledge of horticultural processes and the business of the farm, as



could only have been acquired in gardens and farm-houses. Truly he loved the country at all times and at all seasons; there was nothing beautiful in Nature that escaped his eye.

The progress of flowers, their periods of appearing, their varying forms and qualities, the myriad insect tribes that hover around and within them; the habits of birds, their departure and return; the different customs of animals, the variety of trees, to him revealed new wonders, adding to his knowledge, daily gaining triumphs over Nature, constant progression in wisdom, with increasing admiration and understanding of the productions of the Omnipotent. Ask the student or the learned the most ordinary question regarding vegetable physiology; the probability is that such a subject will be found to have been regarded as beneath a modern student's notion of science, or, at least, that its consideration has never engaged serious attention. Inquire how the knowledge of mathematics gives new views of the sublime science of astronomy, and you will receive the information you demand. Request an exposition of some particular theory in metaphysics, and your desire may still be gratified. Ask him concerning an event in the ancient history of the world, or the connexion of classic fable and historic truth, and your questions are answered. But ask this same literate to describe the function or uses of some common plant or insect—one which he sees every day, with which he has been

familiar from childhood—and he will be unable to answer, nay, most likely, unable to tell its name. Here is the radical error even in our so-styled "University education." Its votaries are conversant with books, not with Nature; they view Nature through the spectacles of books. With the works which form the most lasting monuments of the talents of man they are familiar; of those nobler works which bear the visible impress of the Deity they are often profoundly ignorant. They forget that Solomon "spake of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon, even unto the hyssop that

springeth out of the wall; he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes."

Take courage, ye timid observers, continue to steal hours from the bustle of the world and devote them to the study of natural history; thus shall ye harvest a tranquillizing, contented, and invigorating spirit, when mind and body are fatigued with the exertions of business. Try and follow, however humbly, in the foot-treads of Lubbock, the banker naturalist, who, in his minute insect observations, affords the highest and noblest example of devoted study in its most difficult form. Know you that England's mighty bard also deemed anything and everything, however minute, which God had been pleased to create, worthy of man's closest study. He abundantly felt that "the beauties of the wilderness are His," and the lofty monarch of the forest,





the lowly and fragile flower, the Leviathan with his plated mail, and each tiny wing that flutters in the sunbeam, are only so many varied manifestations of the same Almighty power. Bear in mind that when he lavished on the world his images, no Doddridge Blackmore had lived to delight with the delicious descriptions of England's scenery, abounding in "Lorna Doone," "Alice Lorraine," and other of his writings; neither had a Hugh Miller or Richard Jefferies laid open their caskets of jewels, so eloquent of rural life. The great master spirit had opened the pathways for these and other writers, to trace more fully on the lines mapped out for them, the truest observations of the daily round of animate nature. Now, after a lapse of three centuries, it needs a Harting to depict his familiarity with bird and animal life, and to show us that his intimacy with these, as with all else, was intuitive.

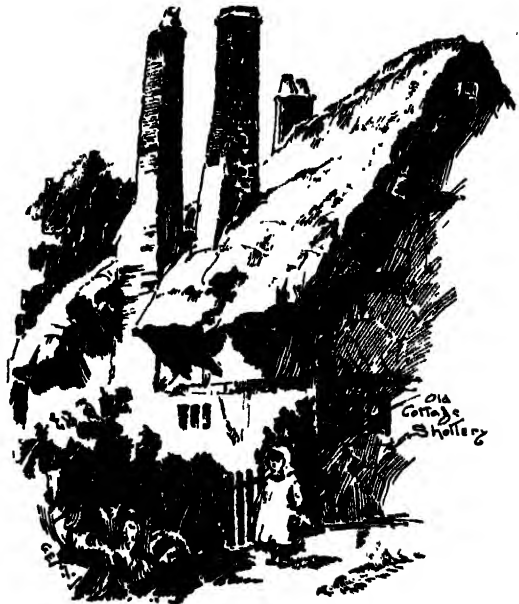
"April greens the ground" all through the Shakespeare country. The primrose, darling of the spring, its fair pale yellow petals wearing that peculiar look of dewy freshness, is one of the earliest begotten of its children. Common as most of God's blessings, its chaste beauty and delicious faint odour seem scattered everywhere where clayey soil exists, and yet it too has its choice nooks and corners where it revels more willingly than elsewhere.

"In the wood, where often you and I
Upon faint primrose beds were wont to lie."
—*Midsummer Night's Dream.*

"Pale primroses
That die unmarried, ere they can behold
Bright Phœbus in his strength."
—*Winter's Tale.*
"Look pale as primroses with blood-drinking
sighs."
—*2 Henry VI.*
"Thou shalt not lack the flower that's like thy
face, pale primrose."
—*Cymbeline.*

On Avon's banks in every moist direction, the golden marigold would put forth its profusion of richly coloured blossoms, and everywhere around the delicate white flowers of the cardamine, known as lady's-smock, or, as Shakespeare has it, "lady-smocks all silver white," but, better perhaps than either, known to young and old as the "cuckoo flower" (the only one of the many which were once so-called that retains its old appellation), are to be seen in all their profusion and simplicity, evidencing a joyful welcome of their namesake.

Here in the first weeks of a genial spring they found many a sweet blossom filling up the beneficent order of Nature, and opening to the sunshine at its appointed time. They despised not the dandelion even with its indifferent naughty character, while the red campion, the vetch, stitchwort, and others had each their charm. Then there was the brown lea beyond, enamelled with daisies powdered over, which Chaucer had before told of, whither he went at early morn to watch "the day's eye" open, and again at eve "to see



this flower, how it will go to rest. For fear of night, so hateth it the darkness."

There now exist hedgerows at Shottery where, along with primroses, ox-lips and arums thrive in rare luxuriance, and many open banks where the purple sweet-violet flourishes in such profusion as to enamel the green sward with its delicate colour. In one of his earliest comedies Shakespeare gives the name Viola to one of his first female creations. There are some fifteen allusions to it in his plays. In "Measure for Measure" it furnishes him with a striking illustration of angels' malignant influence.

pied" as belonging to the happy spring-time of love. In the "Winter's Tale" they supply a delicious passage—though "dim" they are "sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes or Cytherea's breath." In "King John" we are warned that "to throw a perfume on the violet"—which is the essence of all sweetness—"is wasteful, and ridiculous excess." A beautiful reference occurs in "King Richard II." :—



"The tempter or the tempted, who sins most?
Not she; nor doth she tempt; but it is I
That lying by the violet, in the sun,
Do, as the carrion does, not as the flower,
Corrupt with virtuous season."

In "Midsummer Night's Dream" the violet blooms among the flora of Fairyland :—

"I know a bank whereon the wild thyme blows,
Where ox-lips and the nodding violet grows;
Quite over-canopied with lush woodbine,
With sweet musk roses, and with eglantine:
There sleeps Titania, some time of the night,
Lull'd in these flowers with dances and delight."

"It came o'er my ear like the sweet sound
That breathes upon a bank of violets,
Stealing, and giving odour."
—*Twelfth Night*.

In the sweet spring in "Love's Labour Lost," "violets blue" are named with "daisies

"Who are the violets now
That strew the green lap of the new-come spring?"

Cymbeline's princely boys are said to be gentle as zephyrs "blowing below the violet, not wagging his sweet head." Laertes compares young Hamlet's affection for Ophelia to "a violet in the youth of primy nature." Ophelia plaintively says—

"I would give you some violets, but they withered
all when my father died."

And in the dirge over his dead sister Laertes breaks into the poetic effusion—

"From her fair and unpolluted flesh
May violets spring."

Here he clearly refers to the rarer white variety, readily found in the hedges around Stratford, whose hiding-place is generally be-



trayed by wafts of fragrance, and oftentimes deep in the grass hid by the bloom of the ivy-leaved veronica, while the bank beyond may have shone with the blue glints of the germander speedwell.

In the "Winter's Tale" the violet has the finest compliment paid to it. In "Cymbeline," old Belarius compares the king's sons to zephyrs "blowing below the violet, not wagging his sweet head." The great master is so fond of the name that he christens one of his most beautiful heroines Viola, and he shows his love for flowers and the woods by calling many of his characters by their compounds. There is Rosalind, the archest, quickest of all his maids; there is Silvia, "whom all our swains commend." There is also a Silvius: a prince Florizel, too; and a Lord Escalus. Nay, he does not disdain to call his clowns after the same fashion, and we have Peter Turf and Henry Pimpernel as friends of Christopher Sly; and good fellows they were, we warrant. Then, who but Shakespeare would have drawn names for fairies from the same source from whence he gets his clowns? And so we have Fairy Peas Blossom and Fairy Mustard Seed: worthier names they have not in their own realms.

In times when English wines were more used, every housewife in Warwickshire could produce her cowslip-wine. The cowslip is still sold in many markets for this purpose, and little cottage girls still ramble the meadows during April and May in search of it to carry home to their mothers for this wine-making. Sweet Anne, we may feel certain, was an adept in the art, and would often bring forth a glass for Will's grateful refreshment and acknowledgment of her housewife skill. The present occupant of

Mary Arden's birthplace and home at Wilmcote, Mistress Neighbour, "one of the good old sort," maintains in highest excellence the Arden family cunning in the concoction and make of cowslip and other domestic wines. The poet's honoured mother held no higher skill in the craft than does her existing successor to the old homestead, Mistress Neighbour. On occasions of pilgrimages to this dear old farm-house, second in interest to none of England's time-worn relics—not even that of Anne of Shottery—as maid and wife, we have tasted gooseberry wine of her own make, far superior to most of the so-called champagne put on pretentious tables on festive occasions. The Neighbour family cultivate about one hundred acres of land, which formerly belonged to the Arden estate; the present picturesque range of buildings, then as now, formed the homestead. The whole place and its surroundings have undergone little change beyond the decrepitude which even English heart of oak is incapable of resisting. So entirely true is this of the wonderfully quaint old place that its age is difficult of realization in these days of "jerry building." Few "doers" of the Shakespeare country—not even our American cousins—look in to see dear Mistress Neigh-



bour in her old Arden home, every stone and timber of which speaks faithfully of the truly good mother of Shakespeare. Here she was born, and from this, her home of early years, she became the wife of John Shakespeare, and gave to the world a son

possessing the most gigantic intellect for all time. The man or woman, wandering in track of the multitude scouring these more than interesting localities, who yet fails to see



this "unrestored," though not less faithful relic—existing, as it does, in all its original truthfulness—is no Shakespearean, but a mere parrot wanderer for fashion sake.

The meadows round Stratford are, as the country folk say, "smothered" with cowslips. Shakespeare would naturally notice them, and they seem to have been another special favourite with him. Ariel's home is "in a cowslip's bell, where owls do cry," when its doors are fast closed up for the night, and nothing can enter its golden and crimson canopied hall. The fairy in praise of her queen tells us—

"The cowslips tall her pensioners be;
In their gold coat spots you see,
Those be rubies, fairy favours,
In those freckles live their savours."

Was ever a flower described so minutely, and yet so surpassing beautiful? Then, again, when the *yellow lachimo* is cataloguing the beauties of the sleeping Imogen, he notes—

"On her left breast
A mole cinque-spotted, like the crimson drops
I' the bottom of a cowslip."

One would have thought that the former description had quite exhausted imagination, but Shakespeare's verse is ever fresh and sweet as the spring cowslip. This, then, is certain, that cowslips and violets are most

abundant round Stratford, and that they bloom not less so in Shakespeare's verses.

In the hearts of the Shottery lovers the lark held fealty next the nightingale. In what language would the strayer from Stratford depict to his enchantress how, as the first ray of sunshine dispels the glistening dewdrop and gently falls to earth, the lark, warmed by its soft touch, mounts high in air, and joyfully proclaims to all the advent of a new day. So also, the glee expressed in the song of that small brown bird, which, as it soars towards heaven and sings, teaches us the first duty of the day—gratitude to our Creator.

Tradition affirms that the youth of Stratford visited the home of his love "ere the sun had mounted high." Every villager of Shottery affirms it to have been so, and we will not be heretics in the matter. With them, we will in all truth have it that oftentimes at earliest morn he would, in boyish fervour, be bounding over those sweet meadows, love-bound, and with the labourer, whose avocation took him the same way, he would have the lark furnish some indication of the time of day :-

"When shepherds pipe on oaten straws,
And merry larks are ploughmen's clocks."
Song—*Love's Labour Lost*.

When Juliet spoke disparagingly of the lark's song, it was because she wished the





night prolonged, and knew that his voice betokens the approach of day :—

"It is the lark that sings so out of tune,
Straining harsh discords, and unpleasing sharps.

* * * * *

Some say, the lark and loathed toad change eyes ;
O, now I would they had changed voices too !
Since arm from arm that voice doth us affray."

—*Romeo and Juliet*, act iii., scene 5.

The lark has ugly eyes, and the toad very fine eyes, hence arose Juliet's exclamation that the lark and toad had changed eyes. Juliet wished they had changed voices too, for then the croak of the toad would not have indicated the day's approach, and consequently would not have been a signal for Romeo's departure.

Was it a visit to Shottery that afterwards inspired the beauteous song in *Cymbeline* ?

"Hark ! hark ! the lark at heaven's gate sings,
And Phoebus 'gins arise,
His steeds to water at those springs
On chaliced flowers that lies ;
And winking Mary-buds begin
To ope their golden eyes ;
With everything that pretty bin :
My lady, sweet, arise ;
Arise, arise."

The notion of "singing at heaven's gate" was again introduced in one of his sonnets—

"Like to the lark, at break of day arising
From sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven's gate."

When wandering around the Shottery Tryst with the fair one on a clear winter day an occasion may well have offered for Anne to question the trill greeting the lovers' ears,

and called forth from her a hushed exclamation of, "Hark, what is that ? Not the skylark surely, dearest, so late in the year ?" "Yes, Anne, what other throat could so make the very arch of heaven ring with its ecstasy ?" And yet no bird is seen though we search the listening air. Somewhere above us, we know those tiny wings are beating a rapturous rhythm to the measure of that matchless music. The flood of melody pours down upon us as from some world of unguessed happiness. But visible agent there is none, for his joyous notes are heard distinctly when the pained eye can trace his course no longer, and when the ear, well tuned to his song, can, even then, determine by his notes whether the bird is still ascending, remaining stationary, or on the descent. "Stay," he says to Anne, "there is the cunning character after all, that tiny speck showing dark against the ball of the sun. See him drop in the thread of his song, as a spider on his self-spun web." "Gurgle, gurgle, gurgle !" Wordsworth knew him, he is a "drunken" bird. Or if this breathless maze of joy be not intoxication, it is some delirium akin to it. The very listener can scarcely be counted sane and sober, until the little brown witch has nestled back to earth and silence.





It seems singular that the thrush, a bird as much famed for song as either the nightingale or the lark, has been so seldom noticed by Shakespeare. There are but three passages in the entire work of the poet in which the thrush is mentioned. It is referred to once in "A Winter's Tale" (act iv., scene 2); once in "Midsummer Night's Dream" (act iii., scene 1), where Bottom the Weaver, in a doggerel rhyme, sings of

"The throstle, with his note so true";

and once again in "The Merchant of Venice" (act i., scene 2), where Portia, speaking of the French Lord Le Bon, and alluding to his national propensity for a dance on every available opportunity, remarks that—"If a throstle sings, he falls straight a-capering."

Many naturalists who have paid particular attention to the song of the thrush have insisted upon it taking equal rank as a songster with the more favoured nightingale. Certain it is, that the notes of the thrush, although not so varied, nor so liquid, so to say, as those of Philomel, are yet of a clearer, richer tone, and have something indescribably sweet about them; to many ears it is the most cultivated, so to speak, of all our birds, the trills, the runs, the variations are so numerous and contrasted. It is a full-hearted, though soft, delicious, perfect melody, poured forth by the hour, seemingly without break—a wonderful piece of music. Listen, says Mac-

gillivray, to the clear loud notes of that speckled warbler, that in the softened sunshine pours forth his wild melodies on the gladdened ear. Not even the nightingale can equal it when in its sweetest tune of love; the nightingale has not such command; the thrush seems to know no limit. What does it resemble?

"Dear, dear, dear,
Is the rocky glen,
Far away, far away, far away
The haunts of men.
Here shall we dwell in love
With the lark and the dove,
Cuckoo and cornrail;
Feast on the banded snail,
Worm and gilded fly;
Drink of the crystal rill
Winding adown the hill,
Never to dry.

With glee, with glee, with glee,
Cheer up, cheer up, cheer up, hear.
Nothing to harm us, then sing merrily,
Sing to the loved ones whose nest is
near—

Qui, qui, qui, kween quip,
Tiurru, tiurru, chipiwi,
Too-tee, too, tee, chiu, choo,
Chirri, chirri, chooe, chooe,
Quiu, qui, qui."

Shakespeare and Sweet Anne, with their knowledge of the song of the thrush, would have declared this a wonderful imitation, so far as words can express notes. The first four lines, the seventh, thirteenth, and fourteenth, and the last five lines in particular, approach remarkably close in sound, to the original; rendered more apparent if the words are endeavoured to be pronounced by whistling.

Was it not to Sweet Anne he may first, ere

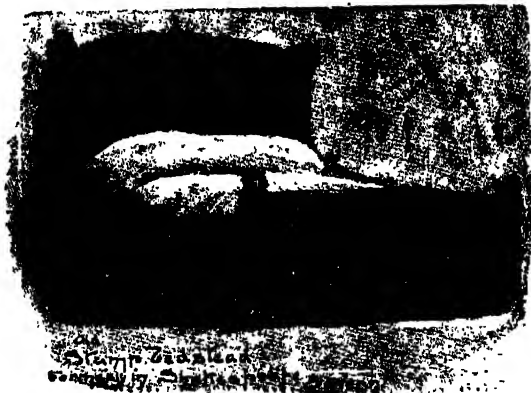


writing the "Two Gentlemen of Verona," have drawn attention to the recorder, a kind of flute, by which birds were first taught to sing? The recording of young birds is always very different from their song, as is also the warble of old birds after moulting. It is a very striking circumstance, that birds which continue in song nearly the whole year, such as the redbreast, the siskin, and the goldfinch, are obliged, after their moulting is over, to record, as if they had forgotten their song. This exercise is less a study than an endeavour to bring the organs of the voice into proper flexibility, what they utter being properly only a sort of warble, the notes of which have scarcely any resemblance to the perfect song, and by a little attention we may perceive how the throat is gradually brought to emit the notes of the usual song. This view leads us to ascribe the circumstance, not to defect of memory, but rather to a roughness in the vocal organs, arising from disuse. It is in this way that the chaffinch makes endeavours during successive weeks before attaining to its former perfection, and the nightingale tries for a long time to model the strophes of its superb song, before it can produce the full extent of compass and brilliancy. Hence the recording spoken of in the play named—act v., scene 4.

"How use doth breed a habit in a man!
This shadowy desert, unfrequented woods,
I better brook than flourishing peopled towns:
Here can I sit alone, unseen of any,
And to the nightingale's complaining notes
Tune my distresses, and record my woes."

In the mind of Shakespeare, of all the singers in the woodland choir the nightingale stood first. In those happy saunterings over to Shottery, its wondrous charms would impress over all others, not even excepting the lark. For quality of voice, variety of notes, as for execution, it was unrivalled. Had Izaak Walton preceded him, how deeply he would have drank in his glorious description that "the nightingale breathes such sweet

loud music out of her little instrumental throat, that it might make mankind to think that miracles are not ceased. He that at midnight, when the very labourer sleeps securely, should hear, as we often have, when musing amid these rural scenes hallowed of William and Anne, the clear airs, the sweet descants, the natural rising and falling, the doubling and redoubling of her voice, might well be lifted above



earth and say, 'Lord, what music hast Thou provided for the saints in heaven, when Thou affordest bad men such music on earth?'

Gardiner, in his "Music of Nature," gives this passage from the song of the nightingale:

"It was the nightingale and not the lark,
That pierced the fearful hollow of thine ear;
Nightly she sings on yon pomegranate tree;
Believe me, love, it was the nightingale."

—*Romero and Juliet*, act iii., scene 5.

Shakespeare, as all others, speaks erroneously of the female bird, whereas it is the male bird only who is the singer.

"She sings as sweetly as a nightingale."

—*Taming of the Shrew*, act ii., scene 1.

The origin of this change of sex is to be found in the old fable which tells us of the transformation of Philomela, daughter of Pandion, King of Athens, into a nightingale, when Progne, her sister, was changed into a swallow (Ovid *Metamorph.*, Book vi., Fable 6). Hence also the name Philomel.

"Philomel, with melody,
Sing in our sweetest play."

Song—*Midsummer Night's Dream*, act ii., scene 2.



"By this, lamenting Philomel had ended
The well-tuned warble of her nightly sorrow."
—*Lucrece*.

"His Philomel must lose her tongue to-day."
—*Titus Andronicus*, act ii., scene 3.

In course of his bird song discourings to Anne he would assert a belief that the mournful notes of the nightingale are caused by the bird leaning against a thorn to sing!

"Everything did banish moan,
Save the nightingale alone:
She, poor bird, as all forlorn,
Lean'd her breast up till a thorn,
And there sung the dolefull'st ditty,
That to hear it was great pity.
Fie, fie, fie, now would she cry,
Teru, teru! by-and-by;
That to hear her so complain,
Scarce I could from tears refrain;
For her griefs, so lively shown,
Made me think upon mine own."

Again, Lucrece, in her distress, invoking Philomel, says:—

"And whiles against a thorn thou bear'st thy
part
To keep thy sharp woes waking."

—*Lucrece*.

Shakespeare himself clearly believed and taught Sweet Anne that the nightingale leaned her breast against a thorn when she gave forth her mournful notes. We do not care to have loving faith in this disturbed by any learned Sir Thomas Browne, pointing to the fact that the nightingale frequents thorny copses and builds her nest in brambles on the ground, or that she knowingly places prickles on the outside of her nest to keep off snakes. We will adhere to the more sentimental belief of the great bard, who knew more of the habits of birds than do any of the philosophers before or since.

Clearly, there were night-walks in those lovely Shottery meadows:—

"Except I be by Sylvia in the night,
There is no music in the nightingale."

—*Two Gentlemen of Verona*,
act iii., scene i.

Dwellers in the country know well that the nightingale is by no means the only bird which sings at night. The wood-lark, sky-lark, thrush, sedge-warbler, frequently sing after sunset.

Shottery boys eagerly sought capture of the cock nightingales on their first arrival before the female birds had come, or at least before the billing and cooing had in earnest set in. Shakespeare, like all close observers of Nature, could tell almost to an hour their arrival, and how, wearied after long flight from distant homes, they might be heard to drop into the bushes of their English homes. He and Anne would discourage their capture to be hung in cages at cottage doors, and would give money ransom for prevention or release. In early boyhood days the great poet had an intuitive knowledge of where the nest of every bird was to be found. Work she "never so wisely," not a feathered mother could escape his searching eye. The light-eluding cell of the tiny wren did not elude him. Vainly for him might she suspend a curtain for concealment of her nursery. The magpie's *chevaux de frise* of thorns was no fortification against his determined will and unshrinking fingers. Other enemies might the wily titmouse hiss away from the house in the wall where she hid

her little ones, but vainly might she simulate the serpent's voice for him who was endowed with the serpent's cunning. With the advance of more reflective years, he looked back with remorse on the time of boyhood's cruelty, and tried to make atone, by enlisting his Anne's sympathy and aid in repressing like instincts in the existing generation of nest robbers. And how, after nesting-time, the lovers would observe the male's assiduity to his little wife, supplying her with food while sitting, and relieving her not infrequently by himself helping in the tedious duties of incubation. And how he serenades her!—breaking the stillness of the moonlit night with his enchanting love-song; for though he sings to her at all times of the day, it is at night, when all the rest of the woodland singers are hushed in sleep, that the full compass of his strain delights us most; and sweeter then, than in the garish light of day, are those exquisite trills of his, and that "one low piping sound, more sweet than all." It is perhaps that "one low piping sound," plaintive but full of tenderness, that has made almost all the poets, from Homer downward, sing of this sweet bird as sad and grief-stricken, and made them weep "o'er Philomela's pity-pleading strains." But he would agree with Coleridge that in "Nature there is nothing melancholy," and that it is the "merry nightingale," and not the "sad bird of night," that can carol forth his love-lay as joyously when the moon and stars are shining as in the warm daylight. Toward the end of the month his song almost ceases: for the young birds of May are then fledged, his gentle mate no longer requires his sympathetic minstrelsy to sustain her.

Anne and Will were both mindful of the bird's constancy in returning year after year to the same spot, as also the seeming apparent absence of any charm in the immediate surroundings to commend the special selections. Our eyes are not theirs. The

lovers would note that in a whole wide parish they may be heard only in one spot, and there they would abound. A hawthorn bush near its nesting-place is a sure resort from whence to pour forth the gushing anthem, and yet it alone will not bring



nightingales. Just in one chosen spot they consent to be heard, and here, as it were, in groups, as though revelling in their endeavours to outdo each other in wondrous melody.

Next to the nightingale, the sweetest of our sylvan warblers is undoubtedly the blackcap. He has been called the contralto singer of the woodland choirs. His strain, while rich and deep in its intonation, has also much variety, and is charmingly modulated. Now it is soft and plaintive, as if the singer were far away, and now, gradually rising in power and compass, we catch a glimpse of him in the branches right above us, his wings slightly drooping and his little throat quivering, while he pours forth a roundelay, witching, wild, and loud. Well may Francis Knight, a sweet singer of the country, say of him, "He is, perhaps, after all, 'the chief of singers.'" Nowhere is the blackcap heard in better song than in the lanes around Shottery and Luddington.





SHOTTERY LANES.



HOTTERY
lanes some-
how seem
sweeter than
any other,
although per-
haps every
English shire
abounds in
lanes that
many would

consider just as green and just as lovely, but the Shakespearean will see charms here not to be found elsewhere. There is a special sweetness and rural peace between the leafy walls of thorn and briar found along these Shottery lanes entirely and exclusively their own. We steadfastly affirm such can nowhere be more enjoyed than here and in its sister village of Luddington. It is early June, no smoke from unsightly chimney-stacks soils the blue sky, everything is fresh and green, no hum of human voices near, and fragrant the herbage on the lane-sides as is the smell from the hay in the fields beyond. Prior to the little Shakespeare Inn at Shottery yielding to the fell power of the "improver," the writer induced mine host to bed him for a night, in order to gratify a restless yearning to

be sheltered, if only for so brief a span, under a roof which had frequently housed the Immortal, after prolonged strolls with sweet Anne until the witching hour when parting had become "such sweet sorrow that I shall say—good-night, till it be morrow."

In the desire to pass a night in the quaint old inn which, under such benightings and intent on early morning rambles, had held him from his Stratford home, a treaty for a night's lodging was concluded with Boniface, the attempted slumber to be in the very chamber sacred to the blissful repose of the youthful poet, when a victim to furnace sighs.

The power of the nightingales on that occasion can never be effaced from the writer's memory. We had been wandering from midday until late at eventide, searching out-of-

rain? An incense-breathing odour from Anne's own sweetbriar may be permitted to be spoken of in bated breath, but cannot be described. It was barely sunrise; a meekly modest white convolvulus that had timidly crept through the hedge was thinking of opening its eyes. This was the only visible emblem of wakefulness. All else was in blessed solemnity of slumber, though uttering volumes to the heart. Was Anne within? Had he sped over and returned to Stratford on the previous night, and was she in dreams?

There are what may be called lane-haunting birds in every rural village of England, but nowhere do they abound more than in the lanes around and about Shrottery. Of all the tribe, perhaps none rejoices more in tangled



the-way lanes and trying to decide as to the most captivating—a hopeless task. After enjoying the best fare afforded by mine host of "The Shakespeare," and, by the aid of Broseley clay-pipes, consuming more tobacco than in any one night of a long life, we sought reflection and slumber in the quaintest of all oak-raftered-roof rooms, and which, of course, was the identical chamber in which "He" had recourse when not in the humour to give up the swceter air for that of Henley Street, Stratford. Sleep, however, was impossible.

With break of day came the "getting up" and sallying forth for an early morning loving peep at the home of Sweet Anne. There had been showers of rain during the night, and there were sweetbriar bushes in that garden of gardens, in which every flower and leaf seemed heart treasures. What can approach the sweetbriar in sweetness after

hedges than the tiny wren, and as the lanes hereabout have long been innocent of shears and pruning hooks, there are plenty of the small round things popping in and out of the hawthorn bushes in all directions. What a restless mite it is, our Jenny Wren! now hopping or creeping, more like a mouse than a bird, through the innermost twigs; now pausing, tail erect, to have a fleeting peep at us: now off again into cover; now, with much fluttering of wing, crossing the lane, and again disappearing, its course only traceable by the trembling leaves; now on a topmost twig, trilling forth its sweet simple lay, doubly dear in the heated summer months, when, in drowsy lethargy, the nightingale and blackcap and most of the lane's warblers have all but ceased their minstrelsy. The little wren, like dear robin red-breast, still sings on. The hedge-sparrow, too, known in Shakespeare's time as the "dunnock,"



has a very tender song, and though the notes are loud and subdued, and but slightly varied, they are exquisitely mellow and plaintive. The so-called hedge-sparrow, or dunnoek, is not really a sparrow at all, and is not gregarious like our obtrusive, self-asserting, plump town friend, whose chirp never ceases the live-long day. "His ditty," as Francis Knight says, "is a simple strain; but we accept it thankfully, remembering the constancy of the singer." Near him, through the hedgerow, filters the hurried song of the white-throat, flickering a few feet into the air, singing all the while. Now he balances on a spray, swelling his little throat with music, until it seems positively to glow. Now he disappears in the hedge, and croons a quiet melody to himself so softly that you fancy him in the next field, until, disturbed by the approach of footsteps, he dashes from cover, with angry notes of alarm. Many of the finch tribe may be termed lane birds, — the chaffinch, greenfinch, and yellowhammer, in all their gayness of plumage, frequent them in spring and summer. There is scarcely a lane in which Jenny is not to be found, yet she is so ubiquitous as to belong alike to woodland, lake and field. The little wren's song sounds sweeter when given freely in advanced summer, when other frequenters of the lane, having emptied their souls of much of their music, or overcome, perhaps, by the heat of summer, are no longer in fullest concert. The brilliant little

goldfinch hardly can forsake the lane; it revels in its tangled, weed-choked hedgerows, especially where there is a plentiful sprinkling of thistles and other large growths. The robin, too, the unquestionable favourite of us all, haunts the Shottery lanes at all seasons. Other birds may have richer voices, and be gayer of attire, but the red-breast, despite his fighting propensity, holds a first place in all our hearts. There is something irresistibly engaging in the way in which he lets us come so near him. When he looks at us askance with those bright wistful eyes of his, there is such trust in us, our hearts are touched at once, and we are ready to believe all the sweet tales that have been told of him. Strewing with leaves and flowers the graves of the friendless, and covering with moss the dead's unclosed eyes, may be sentiments now scarcely tenable, yet we will hug them, for Shakespeare did, and he loved to tell us "how the little red-breast teacheth charity." Moreover, and above all, he is privileged through the touching thought of having fluttered up to the cross, and drawing one of the thorns from the blessed Saviour's suffering brow, staining





thereby for ever afterwards his breast with blood. All through spring and summer these lanes abound with birds, but towards September they scatter themselves, only to return, after a short absence, as thickly as before.

We have always thought the brambles, ever so lusty in Shottory lanes, must have been chosen favourites with Shakespeare and Anne. They were no beggarly briars, no pariahs of the woods to him, but very captains of copse and hedgerow, bold free outlaws—Macheaths of forest and highway. Generous, though, to the poor, for he offers freely of his fruits, and clothes the waste, else barren and bare, and mingles with what an unthankful world deems his betters, dressed often in as gallant bravery as they of bud and blossom. What can equal his love embrace about the laughing May and blushing eglantine? May not the bramble, in the time of blackberries, have presented to the Stratford young poet a picture of life in all its stages. In the compass of that bush may he not have seen at once the poet's seven ages? Here in a group he would have budding infancy, blooming childhood, verdant youth, vigorous prime, fruitful maturity, fading decline, withered age. Who can wander in these lanes without the delight of knowing that it was here he lived and loved; not in the humdrum, fashionable, conventional, or merely sentimental signification of the phrase, but in the very fulness of its meaning; and thus, living and loving, he had learned all, afterwards transfiguring what he had learnt, as occasion suited and required? We may be sure Anne Hathaway was one of his instructors, for, though happily not of the "strong-minded" sort, her gentleness would delicately impart that which could be taught through no other medium. She shared in no small degree in maturing the heart and



ripening the intellect of the great dramatist. It was he who has coupled the lover and the lunatic; and no doubt he had, in his younger years, his fits of lunacy. Later on he loved just as well, though, perhaps, more wisely. His heart, like his head, went on ripening to the end, until they were as sensitive and as wise even as those of Prospero himself. We feel, when here, musing amid his haunts with Anne, that he had the most divine imagination, married to the most human and earthly of hearts, that he contemplated every sphere of life, all occupations, all delights, the classes and the masses, kings and yokels, humorists and Puritans, lovers and buffoons, young men and maidens, old men and children, with the same sympathetic eyes and the same philosophic smile.

The goldfinch is a denizen of the world; in his coat of many colours he is at home alike in the frowning steepes of the Himalayan mountains as in the lanes of Warwickshire; a home-abiding bird, and, though rarely intruding his presence in the garden,

or the door threshold, yet he is no bird of passage. Wherever the thistle, like a tyrant, bears its infertile sway, and the glory of this rigid potentate is on the wane, when thistle-down and gossamer rise light upon the breeze, there is the goldfinch's paradise. Spring bestows a harvest time on them in the first early seeding of the dandelion. Its round feathery seed heads, the "clocks" of our children, are by children and the winds blown to pieces for the goldfinches. He would explain to Anne how summer brings them largely of her bounties in the innumerable heads of the scaly knap or knob-weed, which, though it empurples the meadow to the spoiling the

grass, has its mischief restrained within limits by the hungry goldfinches feeding upon its seeds. But, oh the thistle! What a joy to see them dipping their slender bills into the prickly cover which protects from all but them the downy-crested, down-enveloped grain. These, with groundsel, sow-thistles, and a few others, make up the goldfinch bill of fare from spring to autumn warc. Even the wintry winds leave crumbs unswept for them in the burrs Sweet Anne would find so troublously adhesive to her ankles and garments when wandering with him in these bird haunts. She, in common with others,





when trying to free her petticoats, would wonder what could be the earthly use of burrs. He would point to the goldfinch, who knows by the testimony of his bill that every burr is composed of large flat seeds, curved and set circularly, close together, protected not only by the outwork of hooked but by hard tough skins. The sparrow with his strong thick beak can separate these seeds, but goldy abides patiently until rain and frost come in aid of his weakness and wants, separating the seeds and providing his feast.

Dugdale's "Antiquities of Warwickshire, published in 1615, says of Shottery: - "The earliest account we have relative to Shottery is extracted by Hemyng from an ancient register of the Diocese of Worcester deposited in the Cotton Library, which states that about the year DCCXCIV, during the episcopate of Heatherhead, that Offa King of Mercia, granted xxiiij cassats or houses in this village to that Prelate, for the Church of St. Mary, at Worcester. The Domesday Book does not particularize Shottery, as it was the parcel of the parish of Stratford, and with it the property of the See of Worcester, whence, in the time of King Henry II., Adam de Scettriva held here one hide and a half of land. Nothing else of import occurs relative to this manor until the time of King Edward III., when Richard, son and heir of Richard de Bagindon, granted to Robert de Stratford (Parson of Stratford) his whole right and title to all his lands therein that descended to him from his father by inheritance, which grant bears date at Stratford-super-Avon, the Tuesday next after the feast of St. Matthew the Apostle, 6 Edward III. It is highly presumable that this was what afterwards passed by the name of the manor Shotteriche, as it is certain that the said Robert de Strat-

ford, by his deed, bearing date on Saturday, the feast of All Saints, 28 Edward III. (he being then Bishop of Chichester) entailed this manor of Shotteriche upon John de Bishopton and Isabell, the daughter of John Stretch, and the heirs of their two bodies, and for lack of such issue, to return to him the said Bishop and his heirs.

"In 41 Edward III., John, the son of Sir John Stretch, sold this manor of Shotteryth with ten messuages, six tofts, three carucates of land, fifty acres of meadow, forty acres of pasture, and ten marks rent in Bruggeton, Ruynce Clifford, Stratford-super-Avene (which Thomas de Stratford held for life, he being Archdeacon of Gloucester) to William de Malshe, Dean of Great S. Martin's, London, and Thomas de Newenham, Clerk, for CCC marks of silver.

"In 17 Richard II. the monks of Evesham having, without Royal licence, seized it into their hand, as part of the possessions of Thomas Newnham, Clerk, their bondman, it thereby became forfeited to the Crown, whereupon the King granted it to Sir William



Arundell, Knight, to hold and enjoy so long as it should continue in the Crown for the cause before-mentioned. Several conveyances of this manor occur about the same time, viz., In 17 Richard II., by the same Sir William Arundell, to John Pratt, Thomas Wells, clerk, John Pycard, and William Wenlock, Esq.; and in 8th Henry IV. by the said party to John Olney, Esq., and his heirs; as also in the same year, by the said John Olney, to Richard, Earl of Arundell, Sir Thomas Burdett, and Sir Allured Trussell, Knights, etc. But probably all these were only in trust for John Harewell, Esq., as he was in possession here in 4 Henry IV., and had, in that year, a licence granted to him from John Clifford, then Bishop of Worcester, to have divine service celebrated by a fitting priest in the oratory within his manor house at Shotrech; which licence bears date 29 March, ano. MCCCCII.

"The descendants of John Harewell continued lords of this manor as long as their male line lasted, but by partition made between the sisters and co-heirs of Thomas Harewell, bearing date 4 February, 25 Henry VIII., it was allotted to Agnes, the wife of John Smith, one of the Barons of the Exchequer, in whose line it still continueth."

Dugdale has ever been accepted as a faithful historian. It will be seen how minutely he refers to Shottery as holding within its tiny hamlet a building for the worship of the Most High, according to the forms of the Catholic faith. The Chantry he designates continued uninterrupted its ministration

under a resident ecclesiastic until the Reformation, and when afterwards the little band of faithful ones were by law forbidden, yet for many years after they came without sound of bell to their matin and even song, this without exciting any animosity or even religious jealousy among the neighbours with whom they had in peace and perfect freedom from intolerance so long dwelt.

This humble Chantry was destined, we believe, to take an active part in the early life of Shakespeare; it became, as we hope to impress, a holy place for a betrothal ceremony, doubtless resorted to under circumstances we are not permitted at this distance of time and in ignorance of the facts, fully to understand. That a ceremony took place which his biographers generally have termed "handfasting," but which in their particular case was made to partake of such religious character as constituted in the eyes of Shakespeare, Anne, and the members of their respective families a valid union, we have no question of doubt whatever.

Through some strange fatuity, his biographers having generally been occupied in searching for what they have never been destined to find, and in hatching undesigned meanings for almost every passage and word in his writings, the Shottery Chantry has escaped their notice. Had Haliwell Phillips ever entered its portal, and ascended its stairs to the roof room chapel, it would have disclosed to him a mine of word wealth, if not of inspiration. On this important feature in the love life of the poet more anon.





WOOTTON WAWEN.



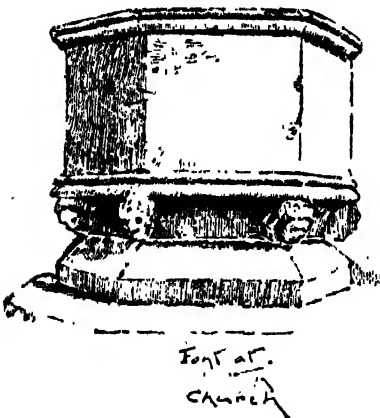
WOOTTON WAWEN, apart from its Shakespearean associations, is one of the most venerable and remarkable churches of the whole Shakespeare country. They who know it not can, through description, gather but little of its charms. It is within a few hours' tramp for the healthful from other fascinating points; and the shorn of leisure, as the ease-loving, can bring it and other Shakespearean churches—Henley-in-Arden, Beaudesert, and Lapworth—all within the compass of a drive from the White Horse at Snitterfield, where well-ordered vehicles are obtainable.

The estate in Wootton formerly possessed by the Harcwell family, ancestors of the present Smith Carington of St. Cloud, Worcester, is notably interesting through the same family having been bound up with the chantry of Shottery and its old Manor House, identified so closely, as the writer believes, with our great poet's betrothal union with Anne Hathaway. Apart from this, the Shakespeare associations commend this venerable and charming edifice and its surroundings in a manner difficult of experience elsewhere. There is no more charming house of prayer and praise. It is in no way an excess of enthusiasm to say that there is no sacred edifice of its size in England possessing greater attractions, both internal and external. Above all, it is well known to have been the frequent resort of our poet, and the pilgrim is at a glance inspired with confident reliance that this temple of God has undergone but very trifling change since his time. Tradition as to his frequent visits here defies all denial: everything connected with the sacred edifice and its surroundings, with the exception of the



PORCH, WOOTTON WAWEN CHURCH.

Hall, a more recent building, remains as in Shakespeare's day; the voice of the water-weir and its delightful gleams of silver as it glides over the artificial barrier; the stream sounds as of yore, although its course has been slightly diverted to admit of a greater spread of the weir, thereby adding to the beauty of the scene. The pilgrim should take rest at the roadside just beneath the weir; everything unites in an enjoyment of revelry conjured up by flashings of thoughts from his writings, the old days, old ways, come into prominence, and there is delight in allowing such mental meanderings their fullest indulgence. Resident believers in apparitions relate that a death by foul means occurred within the walls of the formerly existing hall, and that the ghost of the slain now at intervals wanders around the house and adjoining churchyard. Of course, as in all such instances, there are plenty of traditional witnesses of the ghostly presence of the murdered man and his companion. It is but a five-mile walk from Stratford to Wootton; young William Shakespeare would often be seen searching out short cuts through fields at various points, and by which he would shorten the distance from his home by fully a mile. Weariness he never felt in these Sabbath journeyings, never silent to him, every step developing the creative power and goodness he was on his way to acknowledge and praise in the temple so specially glowing of inspiration. Tradition has it that he was on affectionate terms with the vicar, one John Mascall, who ministered here from 1580 to 1641—a worthy man of much scholastic attainment, united to a genial heart appreciative of the gifts and "gentle spirit" of the youth of Stratford.



With the buoyancy and freshness of youth, what would five miles of field and lane be to him? He would bound over like a young deer, especially with Sweet Anne at his side, and generations of the past always insisted that she often accompanied him to morning service, her family, as well as the Shakespeares, being close friends of the Vicar. The spring or summer dew had at this early hour of morn not vanished through sun-ray power; Anne's feet would be wet enough ere entering Wootton's porchway, but her



Side
Chap.
Wootton
Wawen
Church

heart was light and joyous in the company of her Stratford youth, and Vicar Mascall's

housekeeper was always ready with a change of shoes and stockings. It is matter of tradition that Anne was of "great personal beauty" and had pride in her "pretty feet and ankles," and the same recording angel has added a statement that her fair juniors were not a little envious of her charms, causing her petticoats to be of scantier length than the then rule. It is clear that the beauty of Shottery did not in her generation fail to excite the jealousy which then, as now, reigned in instances where mere youthfulness did not bear the palm.

He would, after morning service, partake of the hospitality of the vicarage close at hand, and as eventide approached, take a short cut homeward through fields to Shottery, and make out the Sabbath evenings with Sweet Anne. The Harewells possessed the Wootton Wawen estate from the latter part of the fourteenth century to the reign of Henry VIII. By the death of Thomas Harewell (the last male heir) in the early part of that reign, this property devolved to his sister Agnes, fifth daughter, and one of the co-heiresses of John Harewell, whose monument yet stands in the chancel of Wootton Wawen Church. She married Sir John Smith, who

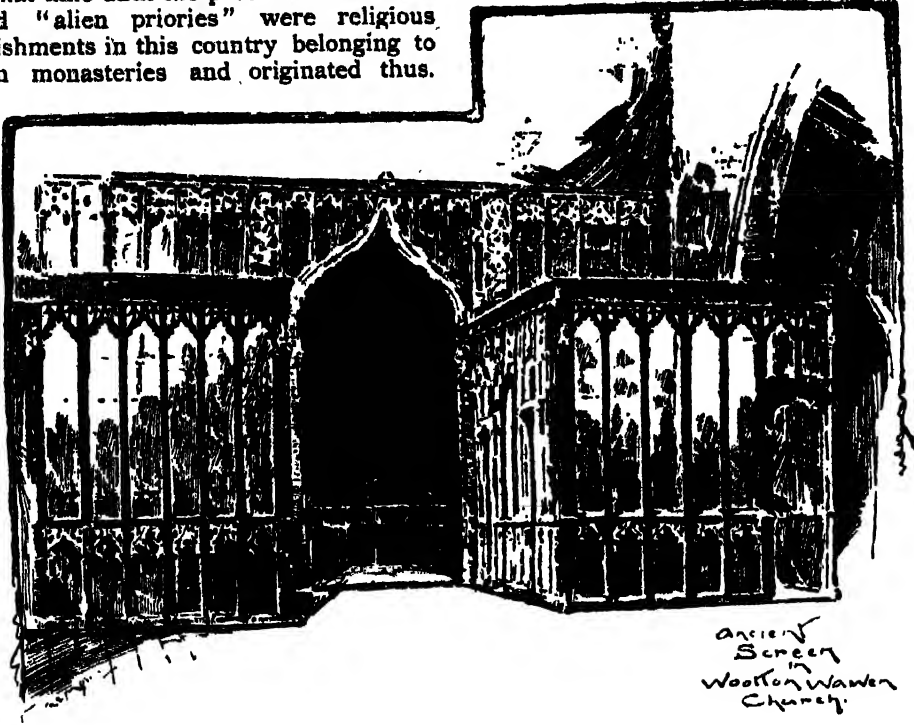
became purchaser of the whole of the lordship. Charles Smith, great grandson to Francis, was, on 31st October, 19 Charles I., created Lord Carrington, whose son Francis erected the present mansion of Italian design at Wootton. The priory of Wootton shared the usual fates which attended the alien priories of the kingdom. Its possessions were twice seized and twice restored during the reign of Edward III. In 22 Richard II. it was given to the house of Carthusians, near Coventry. The building occupying the site, and containing some remains of this religious establishment, is yet called the Charter House. It was restored to the family by Henry IV. when he took possession of the throne. In the general seizure of the alien priories by the Crown, 2 Henry V., it became the property of the king, and was granted by letters patent to Sir Roulard Lenthale. Henry VI., considering the religious origin of the foundation as thus frustrated, restored a prior to some part of the emoluments, and subsequently, on 12th December in 22nd of his reign, bestowed it on the noble collegiate establishment which he had recently founded at Cambridge. The provost and fellows of King's College obtained a full confirmation



Old
Door
in
Battress
Wootton
Church

of their rights from his successor, Edward IV., in the first year of his reign, which they have continued to enjoy uninterruptedly from that time until the present. What are termed "alien priories" were religious establishments in this country belonging to foreign monasteries and originated thus.

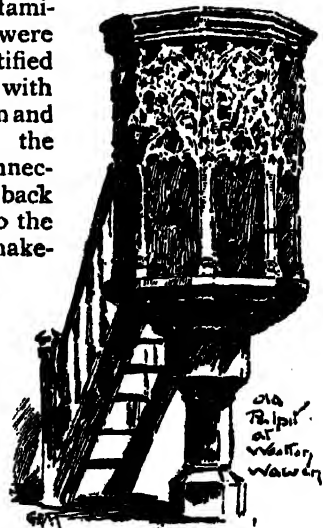
these religious houses paved the way for the general dissolution of monasteries within a century afterwards by Henry VIII.



ancient
Screen
in
Wootton Wawen
Church.

When William the Conqueror and his Norman companions-in-arms had taken possession of England and divided the spoil, they made considerable grants in lands and tithes to the monasteries of their own country. These bodies, with the view probably of extending their own order, as well as of securing the better management of their property here, soon built small convents subordinate to their respective houses. The estates of these alien priories came afterwards to be regarded with jealousy, and during the war between England and France their revenues were generally seized, on the grounds that they went to the advantage of the enemy, and afterwards restored to them on the return of peace. They were thus seized during the reigns of Edward I. and Edward III. They preserved uncertain existence till 2nd Henry V., when all were dissolved by Act of Parliament and their estates vested in the Crown. In the year 1440, such as then remained in the Crown were granted by Henry VI. to Archbishop Chichele, and they became part of his and of the royal foundations. The suppression of

The writer has held, with the present Richard Smith Carington, that through the manuscripts of some of the old Roman Catholic families which were closely identified centuries ago with Wootton Wawen and Shottery, and the priesthood connections traceable back pretty closely to the period of Shakespeare's union with Anne Hathaway, many hoped-for traces might be unearthed. Smith Carington, whose lineage is traced back direct to Alfred the Great, is no mere amateur Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries; he has devoted years



old
Well
at
Shottery
Wawen

to the endeavour, in seemingly likely quarters, to unearth traces of Shakespeare, is not sparing of expense in making researches, and as a devoted Shakespearean, deeply interested through unbroken family connexion with Shotton and Wootton Wawen Manors, will not cease from labour in the direction indicated. He has traced the priesthood down closely to the period of Shakespeare's union, but so far has not succeeded in tracking the priest ministering then at either of the Chantries; if indomitable perseverance can succeed, Smith Carington may

the prosecution of researches among the families of the priesthood of the sixteenth century, has been succeeded in these efforts by the Very Reverend John A. Morrell, a learned antiquarian and devoted Shakespearean scholar, a Catholic priest, until lately ministering at Wootton, but now Sub-Dean at Downside College, Bath, having access to a mine of papers relating to old Catholic families of the neighbourhood. Haliwell Phillips failed to direct his spirit of inquiry in this direction, but afterwards regretted the neglect. It is a path beset with difficulties, because



WOOTTON WAWEN CHURCH (EAST).

yet discover highly valuable facts relative to this most interesting period of Shakespeare's life.

Dugdale, with his reliable correctness, shows how closely the Harewell, Smith and Carington families have been bound up with these manors; though even this testimony of our greatest of olden topographers is not needed to impress a fact which the grand old church of Wootton Wawen so indisputably proclaims, in the remarkable resemblance of the present Richard Smith Carington, of St. Cloud, Worcester, to the recumbent effigy on one of the grand old monuments in Wootton Wawen Church. Cardinal Wiseman, a true Shakespearean, who was helpful in enabling

the priesthood were driven to carry on their religious functions, under fear of extreme penalties, even those of "hang, draw, and quarter." Letters and papers affording the smallest evidence as connecting their office, and more especially close private acquaintance with laymen, as indicative of adherence to or sympathy with the old faith, were destroyed.

There is old wood-work of exceeding beauty of carving, well worth a journey from the kingdom's farthest end to see. One treasure in shape of what is called "The Church Chest," is worth a king's ransom if, as we believe, none other such is to be found. It is a wondrous achievement in

every respect; the iron ornamentation would be worthy of Quintin Matsys in his best form. This venerable combination of oak and iron belonged in days long ago to the

nave, and is shown in our drawing of the church interior.

The present Vicar eschews all use of the ancient pulpit, probably for



THE CHANCEL. WOOTTON WAWEN CHURCH, SHOWING MONUMENTS OF HAREWELL FAMILY.

Harewell family; doubtless its representative, Smith Carington, would delight to spirit it to St. Cloud, Worcester. Other beautiful wood carving exists, notably the pulpit placed against one of the piers, on the south side of the nave.

This ancient pulpit is very remarkable; it is a pre-Reformation, an old Catholic erection, of beautiful design and of a good English oak. There are but few of the class remaining in this country; part of the stem had to be renewed in 1881, a portion of the carved work had been destroyed. There is no modern veneer work here. The framing of the upper part is cut out of two pieces of oak six inches thick. Historians have said a great deal about the luxury of the clergy before the Reformation. The priest, however, for whom this pulpit was made could not have waxen fat, he must have been tall and slim; its internal height is three feet nine inches, and its width one foot ten inches.

There are also considerable remains of ancient wooden screen work or parclose, all of the early part of the fifteenth century, and in perfect preservation. This screen work, which now serves as seat place for the choir, is at the east end of the

reasons of incapacity of space, or fear of precipitation down its few, though narrow stairs: he delivers his addresses to his congregation from the floor of the church.

On the north side of the chancel, between the two windows and adjoining the wall, is a high tomb of the fifteenth century, the south side of which is relieved by four plain heater-shaped shields, and the east end by two similar shaped shields, the armorial



ANCIENT OAK CHEST, WOOTTON WAWEN CHURCH.
Believed to have belonged to the Harewell family.

bearings on all of which are obliterated. On this tomb is the recumbent sculptured effigy, in alabaster, of a man in armour. He is represented as wearing a pointed basinet or salade on his head, encircled by an orle or

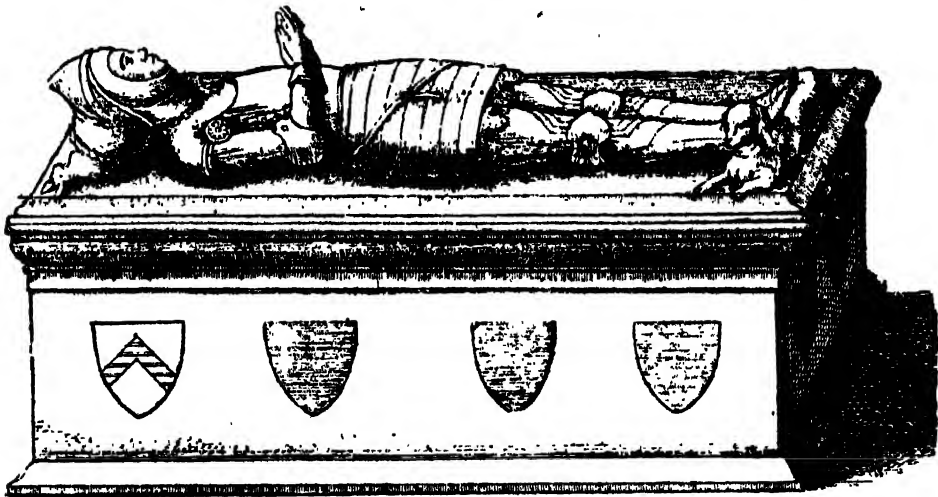


chaplet for the purpose of resisting the pressure of the jousting helm. The neck is protected by a gorget of plate, round which a chain is suspended; to the breastplate is attached a skirt of tassets, consisting of eight plates, and beneath the tassets appear the extremities of the apron of mail, cut in Vandyke fashion; circular plates or palettes appear in front of the armpits, instead of

gussets, to protect them; the shoulders and arms are covered by espauplières of overlapping plates, rerebraces with ornamented scams, escalloped elbow-plates, and vambraces seamed like the rerebraces; on the hands, which are joined on the breast as in prayer, are gauntlets. The lower limbs are incased in cuisses, genouillères, jambs seamed down the sides, and sollerets; the latter of

overlapping laminæ or narrow plates, and pointed at the toes. The necks and rowells of the spurs are gone, but the shanks and spur leathers over the insteps remain. A narrow sword-belt crosses diagonally from the right hip to the left thigh. Under the head is placed the jousting helme with mantling terminating in tassels, but the crest is gone. At the feet is a long-eared hare with a collar round the neck. The armour of this effigy is of the kind in fashion in the reign of Henry the Fifth, and though there is no inscription to denote the person for whom it was intended, it can hardly be doubted but that this is the monument of John Harewell, who died A.D. 1428, and

(differing in shape and size), with the edges turned up so as to resemble pass guards, protect the shoulders; and rerebraces, elbow-plates, and vambraces the arms. The hands are bare, but joined as in prayer. A narrow belt, buckled in front, crosses the body diagonally from the right hip to the left thigh; the thighs (the lower parts only of which are visible) are incased in cuisses; the knees are protected by semi-globular-shaped genouilleres with plates above and below, and the legs and feet by jambs and sollerets, the latter broad at the toes; rowelled spurs appear affixed to the jambs, which descend to and cover the heels. The figures of the five sons, which bear no pro-



bequeathed his body to be buried in this church, dedicated in honour of St. Peter.

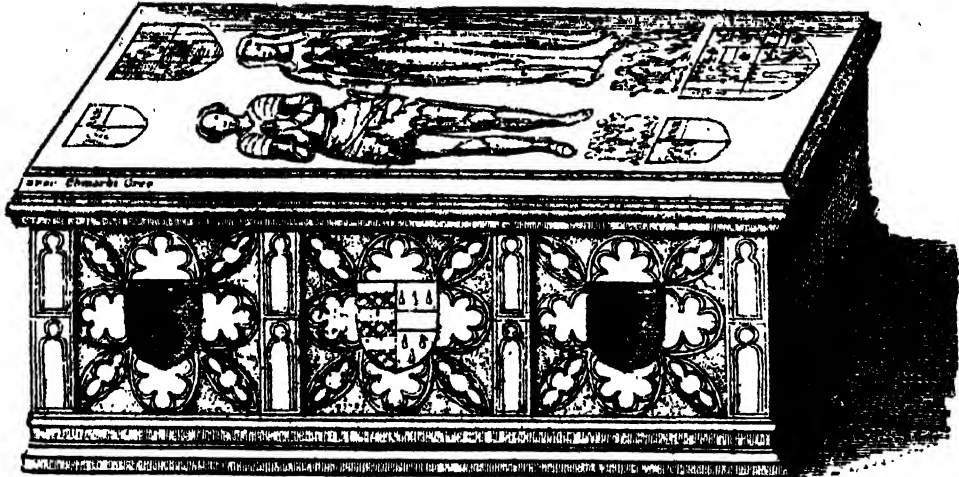
On a high tomb on the north side of the chancel within the altar rails, and adjoining the wall, covered with a slab of dark-coloured marble, with an inscription on a brass plate running round the verge, are the inlaid brass effigies of John Harewell, Esquire, who died A.D. 1505, and of Dame Anna, his wife. Small figures of five sons appear beneath the effigy of the father and of five daughters beneath that of the mother. The effigy of John Harewell represents him as bareheaded without any jousting helme or casque as a supporter, and his hair cropped in the peculiar fashion of the reign of Henry the Seventh. A collar of mail appears round his neck; to the skirt of the breastplate small pendant and angular-shaped tuillettes are attached, and beneath these appears the apron of mail. Pauldrons

portion in size to the principal effigies, represent them as standing, bareheaded, in long side-gowns, and with the hands raised in prayer. The effigy of the lady represents her attired in the pointed angular or pedimental head-dress, a fashion of the latter part of the fifteenth century, with ornamental lappets hanging down on each side of the face to the shoulders; her neck is bare, she wears a gown: open and cut square at the breast, with large hanging sleeves, from beneath which the close-fitting and puckered sleeves of the kirtle or petticoat appear; her hands are joined as in prayer. By a chain suspended from her waist is a scent box called a pomander; her shoes are round-toed and appear from beneath the train of the gown; no mantle is worn. The figures of the five daughters, of the same size as those of the sons, represent them as attired in pedimental head-dresses

and gowns similar to the dress of their mother. At the head of the slab are two brass escutcheons charged with armorial bearings, that over the head of the lady being both larger in size and with more quarterings than the other, and at the foot of

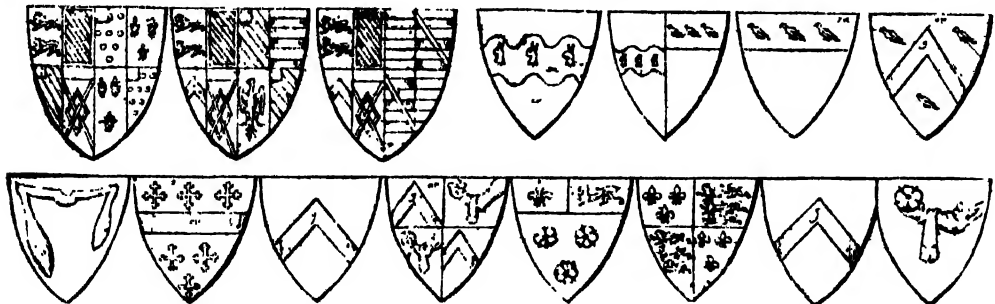
now plastered and whitewashed, perhaps to conceal the mutilations beneath.

On the north side of the chantry chapel near the east end is a high tomb, beneath a horizontal tester or canopy, supported by pilasters at the back, and in front by



the slab the same are repeated. From a blank being left in the inscription for the date of the death of the lady, this monument appears to have been constructed during her lifetime, but after the death of her husband. The letters of the inscription are raised, the

Ionic columns, and surmounted by a crest of scroll work and an escutcheon in the centre with helme and mantling within a circular compartment; the escutcheon is charged with the arms of Smith and Harewell quarterly. The extremities of the tomb pro-



intermediate parts being hatched or abated, and the inscription is as follows :—

Hic jacet Johes Harewell armig' et dna Anna gondam uxor eius ac nup' uxor Edwardi Grey militis qui quidem Johes obiit 1^o aprilis anno dni M^o et que quidem Anna obiit die eodni M^o quorum animas ppitietur deus.

The front of this tomb, as engraved in Dugdale's "Warwickshire," is covered with ornamental panelling and shields, but it is

ject in front and serve as plinths for the columns. In front the tomb is divided into three compartments, each lateral one containing an escutcheon surrounded by a border of scroll work, whilst that in the middle contains an inscription. At the back of the monument, above the tomb but under the canopy, is a tablet surrounded by scroll work and bearing an inscription; and on each side of this are represented, in relief, the emblems of mortality conventional in the sixteenth century, as a spade, a scythe, bones, a pickaxe, and an hour-glass. On

the tomb is the sculptured effigy of a man in armour, reclining on his right side, with his head resting on his helme and his right hand and arm supporting his face. He is represented bareheaded, with a long beard; and round his neck a ruff. His armour consists of a cuirass, or breast and back-plate, pauldrons of plates overlapping upwards with scalloped borders, rerebraces, elbow-pieces, and vambraces; the hands are bare, and round the wrists are ruffles; appended to the skirt of the breastplate are tassets, and from the trunk hose appear cuisses, below which are genouilleres, jambs, and round-toed solerets with rowelled spurs. Along the frieze of the canopy is the following inscription:—
 Vive Deo mundoq. mori perdisce caduco, Sola salus cœlo, cœtera vana nihil. Nascimur et morimur, morti contermina certa Vita stat incerto perfruitura bono. On the tablet at the back of the monument is as follows:—
 D.O.M.S. Francisco Smith Armigero viro vitæ integerrimo, animi fortitudine, morum probitate spectatissimo, pacis cultori, patriæ amatori observantissimo; æqui boniq. vindici acerrimo, pauperum propugnatori eximio, prosapia tam avitæ dignitate stirpis quam perampla virtutum serie cohonestata oriundo, sobole mascula (ipso etiam adhuc superstitute annorumq. pleno) ex se quarta linea auctorius ex filio nepos et hæres tam pii haud



immemor parentis, hoc mon: gratitudinis et amoris ergo. P. On the middle division in front of the tomb—Hic jacet Franciscus Smith Armiger filius Johannis Smith militis et Dominæ Agnetis, uxoris ejus hæresq. ejusdem Agnetis, unæ cohæredum Johannis Harwell armigeri: Qui quidem Franciscus octoginta quatuor jam annos natus, placide ex hac vita migravit. Anno Dni. 1606, die 3 Septembris.

The Harewell family lived in a mansion on or near the spot where Richard Hawkes now lives, and over whose door is a very splendid piece of carving which attracts the attention of all passers-by.



THE SHOTTERY OLD MANOR HOUSE.



SXTREME interest attaches to what in Shakespeare's time was called the Old Manor House, and which was formerly surrounded by a *fosse* or mote, now plainly traceable. The roof room of this relic of the poet's days

was availed of for secret celebration of mass in the time of and after the Reformation. The remains now form one of the Marquis of Hertford's farm-houses. It was originally part of the priory; the roof of the chapel is plainly to be seen, and is of Gothic character. The garden at the back of the house is now called the priory garden. The inhabitants of Shottery used to have a chantry called St. Andrew's, in the south aisle of Holy Trinity, Stratford: this was transferred to Shottery in 1392, and mass was from that time, occasionally, if not regularly, celebrated in a building, either the same or previously

existing on the same site as the now Manor House.

It comes down from the poet's time that the "Midsummer Night's Dream" owes much of its creation to this old hall. Being close at hand, he and Anne would often be found within the walls, now to us radiating with visions. At this distance of time we seem to hear the rustling of garments and the sound of voices in the deserted rooms; the pattering of feet on the worm-eaten staircase; the light of still, shady summer afternoons, hundreds of years ago, seem to fall through the casements and lie upon the floor. There is an interest to everything about the house, even to the quaint iron fastenings about the windows, because they would have arrested his attention, and been dwelt on in dreamy hours of thought. The fires that once burned in those old chimneys, the flickering sparks, the curling smoke, and glowing coals, all inspired their fancies.

There is a strong tinge of household colouring in many parts of Shakespeare, imagery that could only have come from habits of quiet household contemplation. See, for example, this description of the

stillness of the house, after all are gone to bed at night :—

Now sleep yslaked hath the rout ;
No din but snores the house about,
Made louder by the o'er-fed breast
Of this most pompous marriage feast.
The cat, with eyne of burning coal,
Now crouches 'fore the mouse's hole ;
And crickets sing at th' oven's mouth,
As the blither for their drouth.

Also this description of the midnight capers of the fairies about the house, from "Midsummer Night's Dream" :—

Puck. Now the hungry lion roars,
And the wolf behowls the moon ;
Whilst the heavy ploughman snores,
All with weary task fordone.
Now the wasted brands do glow
Whilst the scritch-owl, scritch-ing loud,
Puts the wretch, that lies in woe,
In remembrance of a shroud.
Now it is the time of night,
That the graves, all gaping wide,
Every one lets forth his sprite,
In the church-way paths to glide :
And we fairies, that do run
By the triple Hecate's team,
From the presence of the sun,
Following darkness like a dream,
Now are frolic ; not a mouse
Shall disturb this hallowed house :
I am sent, with broom, before,
To sweep the dust behind the door.
Obe. Through this house give glimmering light
By the dead and drowsy fire :
Every elf and fairy sprite,
Hop as light as bird from brier,
And this ditty, after me,
Sing, and dance it trippingly.
—*Midsummer Night's Dream*, act v., scene 2.

The tumble-down farm buildings surrounding this old Manor house within two generations were noted as the established home of several families of owls, a remarkable gregation, opposed to naturalist experiences, which assert that the several species of the family of *Bubo*, of ominous character, decline associateship. Despite this disregard of learned authority, Shottery could boast of several species of owls, all in harmonious keeping, around and about the Manor, protected, as is said, consequent on traditional superstition that the whole tribe were especially Will and Anne's birds, and that to dislodge them would be a crime sure to entail sorrow and disaster on the perpetrator. Members of these owl fraternities were allowed safe mid-day roaming, without risk of boy stoning, but whether this reverence and protection came down from Shakespeare and the generations who have held the Manor through the since long-back days, is anything but conclusively proven. It is well known that Shottery lands were once desolated by mice, and that deliverance from the pest had been vouchsafed through the medium of the owls. This should be sound cause of their immunity from the destruction marauding men and boys wage on the whole owl fraternity. Anyway, the venerable owl is here claimed as Shakespeare and Anne's bird, and far be it from us to seek to dispel the thought. They would have fear and dread ; indeed, neither would desire to offend the bird whose weird shout of command, announcing the parting hour, had never failed to send him home to





Shottery Manor

ford on the oft-repeated occasions of prolongation of his love visits.

"It was the owl that shrieked, the fatal bellman
Which gives the stern'st good-night."

—*Macbeth*, act ii., scene 2.

Formerly there was a small, rude bell-turret in the roof of the Old Manor House, in which hung a bell used to summon the faithful to prayers. All sign of the bell has long since disappeared, though its turret can be traced. The white owl, a "high churchman," proverbially attached to old sacred edifices, would in it find a sanctuary, as others have done. A precedent is recorded that one of this species took possession of the interior of Charing Church, Kent, in the town of which its ancestors for many years dwelt, through the protection of the vicar. It is well known that an old bell, bearing inscribed date 1540 or 1607, was in the possession of Mr. William Pickering of Luddington, in 1806, and was suspended in a venerable elm-tree until within the last fifty years. Like many other valuable relics, it has disappeared. At the time it was missed, inquiry elicited that

it had been bartered away for a set of house bells, hung in an adjoining farmhouse. Although this bell was said to have been the bell of Luddington old church, there existed a belief that it was the identical mass bell of the Shottery Manor turret, a not improbable statement, as if Luddington could have proved ownership, it would hardly have been permitted thus quietly to find its way into the elm-tree.

We are unable to arrive at any other conclusion than that the ceremonial, whatever it was, which made Shakespeare and Anne Hathaway man and wife, and conscientiously enabled them as such to take up their abode under the maternal roof at Shottery, which occurred at the time, was carried out either in the Roof Chapel or the Oratory of the Old Manor House. It was a place dedicated to God's worship and ordinances. Shakespeare had resolved on taking up his abode in London, and the Holy Father of the Chantry would, under solemn secrecy, lend himself to whatever ceremony took place, possibly with hope of eventually confirming them in the Roman Catholic faith. In this he evidently underrated the influence of Simon

Hunt, Will's old master and devoted friend, who successfully strove his utmost to keep the young couple in the true fold, despite the Chantry ceremony. In connection with this more than interesting circumstance, how vividly Friar Lawrence's remonstrances with Romeo recur, giving utterance to words bearing, as they do, with such marked significance on the poet's evident position at the moment. It is only needed to substitute London for Mantua, and all is rendered clear.

The Holy Father of the Shottery Chantry says :—

"Go, get thee to thy love, as was decreed,
Ascend her chamber, hence and comfort her;
But, look, thou stay not till the watch be set,
For then thou canst not pass to Mantua;
Where thou shalt live, till we can find a time
To blaze your marriage, reconcile your friends,
Beg pardon of the prince, and call thee back
With twenty hundred thousand times more joy
That thou went'st forth in lamentation."

—*Romeo and Juliet*, act iii., scene 3.

Our honestly expressed convictions as to the first marriage of Shakespeare having been privately celebrated in the Old Manor House of Shottery, and in being first thus to remove all matter of such ceremony out of the

worse than mystery of doubt and uncertainty bewildering it, may be met and to a degree contradicted by the reminder that all Chantries were abolished in 1545, the last year but two of Henry VIII. This is unquestionably true, so far as historical record asserts, but not so in practical reality; for although many of the priests officiating in these sanctuaries had been deprived of their incomes and had ceased the performance of mass in their former accustomed buildings, yet their altogether repres-

known that around Birmingham and Coventry there existed about the time of Shakespeare's union with Anne, numerous places in which the priesthood privately celebrated mass. The little Chantry at Shottery, which, at the time of the first great change had been converted into a farmhouse and placed in the occupancy of a Catholic gentleman cultivating the lands attached thereto, proved a quiet shelter for the holy man who had previously been known only for unob-



sion was found impossible notwithstanding the severest penal enactments. History tells us that even the forced reading of homilies from the pulpit of the churches and the substitution of surplice for chasuble, so also the use of the Communion Office instead of the Mass Book, did not prevent private celebrations in secret places, so dear to the zealous adherents of the old faith. The comparative security of the Catholics from persecution during the early part of Elizabeth's reign, arising in part from the sympathy and connivance of the justices of the peace, greatly aided these private ministrations of the Catholic priests, who, wherever possible, remained quietly at their posts, and it was not until an irruption of the large body of Jesuit priests from Douai that recourse to extreme severity was reverted to. It is well

trusive devotion to the more sacred duties of his calling. The Manor House wore then, as now, no appearance of being a resort for public worship; the bell had been removed and entrusted to protective hands, thus disarming hostile zealots, if any existed in the neighbourhood, and the then Vicar of Stratford was given rather to toleration than any encouragement, much less promotion, of persecution. The Hathaways, regard being had to the more than limited number of persons dwelling in the little hamlet, must have been known to all. Anne would have grown up in close companionship with the family at the Manor, whose officiating ecclesiastic in all likelihood served as model for Shakespeare's more than sympathizing Friar Lawrence. The writer does not pretend to define what was the precise nature of the ceremonial



service, to which, no doubt, the lovers heartily responded. Sufficient it is to know that it satisfied the conscience of a manly Christian youth of unblemished character, and instinctive honour, and that his envied bride realized it as in every way meeting her most delicate sensibilities as a well-born English maiden.

"A good man ther was of religioun
That was a poure persone of a toun;
But riche he was of holy thought and werk.
He was also a lerned man, a clerk
That Criste's gospel trewely wold preche.
His parishens devoutly wolde he teche.
Benigne he was, and wonder diligent,
And in adversite ful patient;
This noble ensample to his shepe he yaf
That first he wrought, and afterwards he taught.
He dwelt at home, and kepste well his fold.
So that the wolf he made it not miscarie,
He was a shepherd, and no mercenarie,
To drawen folk to Heven, with fairnesse,
By good ensample, was his besinesse,
He waited after no pompe ne reverence,
He maked him no spiced conscience,
But Criste's love, and his apostles twelve,
He taught, but first he followed it himselfe."

GEOFFREY CHAUCER.

We are now brought to a period of the young poet's life—his marriage—when it is asserted a great moral wrong was committed; but for the accusation there exists as little foundation as for the other defamatory statements against him. Consequent on a double ceremonial, first by handfast, or whatever religious service took place in Shottory

Chantry, by virtue of the office of the resident authorized priest, and afterwards by formal marriage—the latter in accordance with the rites of the Protestant Church—he has been most unjustly dealt with. He and Anne having subjected themselves to both ceremonies has never been questioned. We must remember that the ancient act of betrothing had not fallen into disuse at that time, any ceremony conducted in the Catholic Chantry would have the fullest weight in the mind of William and Anne's family and friends; and of greater importance it is to bear in mind that his wife's family, as in the case of his own father and mother, may only somewhat then recently have broken away from the ancient faith, though deprived of the exercise of public worship according to its rites—they would not be indifferent to the efficacy of any ceremony conducted within its pale. It is matter of history, fully attested by the faithful historian Dugdale, that there existed at the time, in the little village of Shottory, a Roman Catholic Chantry; in this volume we give sketches of an existing roof room of the building in which mass was then secretly celebrated. Mary Arden, the poet's mother, must have been brought up in that faith, for it was clearly the religion of her father when he made his will, only a very short time before her marriage. Who shall say what was not the actual inward faith of the poet's father? for, although he did take the usual Protestant oath in the year in which he was elected Alderman of Stratford, he took it tardily. Families were in a transition state between the two faiths, ashamed to abjure the old, and without apparent desire to embrace the new. The legality and efficacy of "handfast" was no wise doubted by either, and, therefore, presented to the young couple an easy way out of the difficulty.

It is impossible to say what the difficulty was. To embark in suggestion would be to follow the footsteps of the verbose commentators and word exponents, who, if continuing to pursue their avocation but one generation more, will have multiplied their learned explanations into about five hundred fold that of the great original text they may have laboured so zealously to muddle and mystify. So far as can be judged in the absence of any reliable testimony to guide to any generally acceptable conclusion on the point, there does not appear to have been any feud between the families on either side, and yet we have the plot of *Romeo and Juliet*, written

in the early prime of the great master's manhood, based mainly on family hatreds, and clearly suggestive of his own deepest devotion to one around whom all his most fervent love had been entwined. Here it would seem best to leave the question, with this reservation: that none but a coward destitute of even one spark of manliness will dare to impeach the chastity of his affianced one or his own knightly honour. Whatever the difficulty may have been, the mysteries attaching to it at this great distance of time exist largely only in imagination and conjecture.

There is no question whatever that in Shakespeare's time betrothal by "handfast" was not an obsolete rite. Previous to the Reformation, it was, in all probability, that civil rite derived from the Roman law, which was confirmed, indeed, by the sacrament of marriage, but which usually preceded it for a definite period, stated at forty days, having generally the effect of the marriage of the church as regarded the unrestrained intercourse of those so espoused. Shakespeare's handfast, combining as it did a religious ceremony by the reverend Father of Shottery Chantry, was altogether exceptional in its nature and entirely justificatory in the eyes of both parties in at once taking up the condition of man and wife in the Hathaway homestead. A work published in 1543, "The Christian State of Matrimony," says: "Yet in this thing also must I warn every reasonable and honest person to beware that in the contracting of marriages they dissemble not nor set forth any lie. Every man, likewise, must esteem the person to whom he is handfasted none otherwise than for his own spouse. After the handfasting and making of the contract, the church-going and wedding should not be deferred too long." Although from what we have said of Shakespeare and Anne's betrothal in Shottery Chantry, it may be inferred that it partook of ceremoniousness beyond that of the handfast of the time, yet in truth the holy father's presence may only have been availed of for purposes of "testimony," and as such attaching solemnity as beyond any possible gainsaying. In the form of espousal, so minutely recited by the priest in "Twelfth Night," he is there made to be present simply to seal the compact by his "testimony."

In "Twelfth Night" we have a minute description of the ceremonial under which Shakespeare and Anne were first made man and wife. When Olivia is hastily espoused to Sebastian, she says:—

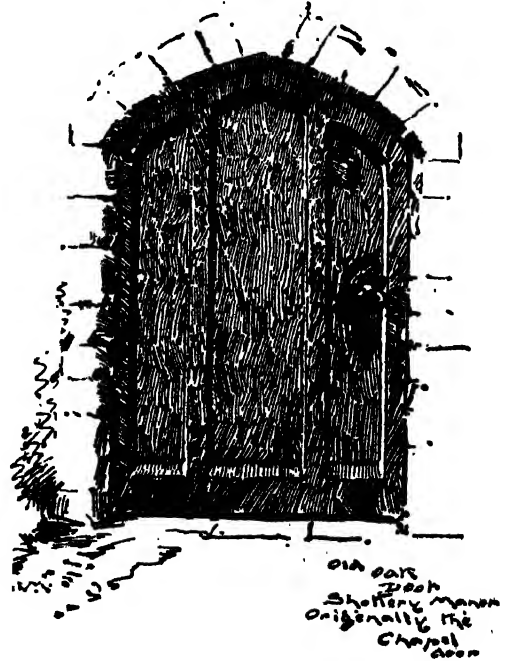
"Now go with me, and with this holy man,
Into the Chantry by: there before him,
And underneath that consecrated roof,
Plight me the full assurance of your faith;
That my most jealous and too doubtful soul
May live at peace: He shall conceal it,
Whiles you are willing it shall come to note,
What time we will our celebration keep
According to my birth."

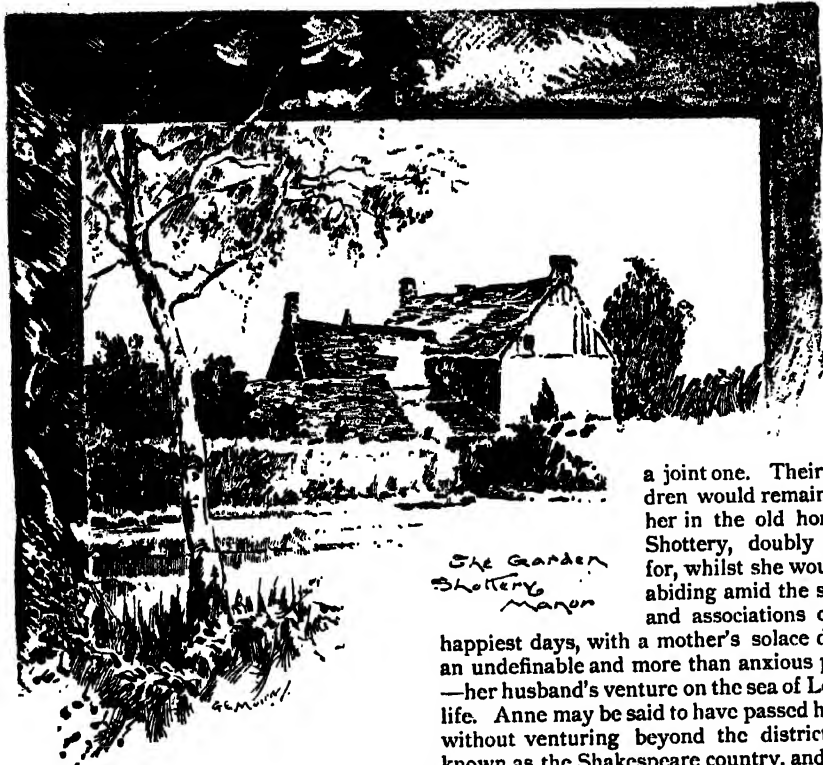
This powerfully written minute statement may be pronounced a circumstantially accurate account of his own union with Anne in the Manor House Chantry. None but a Julius Bacon or Ignatius Donnelly will have the daring effrontery to insult the memory of the conscientious God-fearing Shakespeare by asserting that he wickedly and designedly got possession of his wife's person by fraud, and worse. He was no libertine of the class daily exhibiting in the Divorce Court of these later times. Anne was a lady, the consciences of both were honestly and rightly satisfied by the Chantry espousal, coupled with an agreement of an early after celebration by his old tutor and loved friend, Simon Hunt, curate of Luddington—hence her exclamation:—

"We will our celebration keep
According to my birth";

thus asserting her honour, and mindful of her own family position.

The story of "handfast," in Shakespeare and Anne's case, we contend must be placed in the same category with the other unfounded stories regarding the Stratford bard.





His own reading of the solemn binding of handfast cannot be more forcibly impressed than in the repeated and express warnings which Prospero urges upon Ferdinand in "The Tempest," act iv., scene 1, where we have it plainly set forth :—

"If thou dost break her virgin knot before
All sanctimonious ceremonies may
With full and holy rite be minister'd,
No sweet aspersion shall the heavens let fall
To make this contract grow ; but barren hate,
Sour-eyed disdain, and discord, shall beshrew
The union of your bed with weeds so loathly
That you shall hate it both : therefore, take heed,
As Hymen's lamps shall light you.

Do not give dalliance
Too much the rein : the strongest oaths are straw
To the fire i' the blood ; be more abstemious,
Or else, good-night your vow !"

The fact of so little having come down to us regarding the Hathaway family we may accept as an assurance that Anne was no "gadder," no "busybody," save in the domestic duties attaching to her widowed mother, and her own husband's household management, and which from the day of the handfasting and after his setting out for London, there is good reason to believe was

a joint one. Their children would remain with her in the old home at Shottery, doubly cared for, whilst she would be abiding amid the scenes and associations of her happiest days, with a mother's solace during an undefinable and more than anxious period—her husband's venture on the sea of London life. Anne may be said to have passed her life without venturing beyond the district now known as the Shakespeare country, and probably her only dissipation would be at long interval visits, duly escorted by her lover, to witness with him such theatrical representations as were then in great vogue at Coventry. The young poet's imagination was then more than awakened by these plays, in all probability he was the author or adapter of many of them. The occupants of the Manor House at Shottery would most likely be as close friends as they were neighbours of the Hathaways. Who can gainsay there being of the household one of her own sex and age ? Being of like status in the little society, for we must not lose sight of Anne being of gentle birth, the closest tie may have existed between them, and would serve as helpful in explaining what we believe to be the fact—that young William Shakespeare and Anne Hathaway were privately married at this very Manor House at Shottery.

It will very reasonably be inquired, How is it that this asserted secret marriage of Shakespeare with Anne has not been put forward earlier, and that the Chantry Chapel-room at Shottery is now for the first time asserted as the place of its celebration ?

Haliwell Phillips, who devoted a life to hunting up matters and things connected with the poet's history, was frequently enough in Stratford, and could hardly have overlooked so important and interesting a matter. We acknowledge the extreme diligence of Phillips in his researches, as also his having piled up a huge mountain of material and commentary, assumed of high value in connection with the great bard's presumed life and history, with, however, the vital omission of the Old Manor House, the which he never entered, the place always having been in private occupation as a gentleman's residence, and therefore not open to inspection.

It is within the bounds of truth that during all the years of the present tenant's occupancy of Shottery Manor hardly a living

declared his adherence to the great principle of the Reformation—the acknowledgment of the civil sovereign as head of the Church. From that day forward there was no hesitation or drawback. Any speculative opinions he may previously have held were loyally abandoned, all would be made to shape to the creed which he must publicly have professed in his capacity of magistrate. Moreover, be it remembered, the distinctions between the Protestant and the Popish recusant were then not so numerous or speculative as they afterwards became. That the poet was firm in the opinions of the Reformation needs no stronger confirmation than his lines in "King John" against the "Italian priest" and those who
 "Purchase corrupted pardon of a man."



soul had ever entered it on Shakespeare researches intent. Why should it have been otherwise? Few have realized that it had in olden days served as a religious house, and externally it bears no sign of such, still less have there ever been notions that it was what is known as the house of the handfast. There, however, may be found the antiquated roof room in which the mass was solemnized long anterior to and during his lifetime. We shrink from possibly inflicting on its hospitable present occupant any irruption of the curious, though to our own mind there exists no more interesting memorial of the great poet's life. Time will award it this position.

We have no intention to convey any convictions that either Shakespeare's father or mother were other than honestly members of the reformed faith; we believe with Knight, that both were, at the time of his birth, of the religion established by law. John Shakespeare may appear to have been slow in taking the oath requisite for the attainment of aldermanic honours, easily enough understood, as seeming to reflect on his own and his wife's parents. By holding this high office, after the accession of Queen Elizabeth, he had solemnly

Neither can we lose sight of the words he introduces into the famous prophecy of the glory and happiness of the reign of Elizabeth:

"God shall be truly known."

He was without doubt, in the opinions which his father publicly professed in holding office, subject to his most solemn affirmation of those opinions. His mother, too, whatever may have been the faith of her parents, or of her own earlier youth, had become firmly and becomingly of one mind with her husband, and had taught her boy William his catechism in all sincerity, taking him regularly to the holy temple in which he and his brothers and sisters were baptized; so also she earnestly and faithfully did her duty in preparing him for the discipline of the school in which religious instruction by a minister of the reformed church was regularly afforded as the end of that other knowledge there taught, and of which he had so wondrously and abundantly profited. That he became tolerant, is shown by the manifestation of his after writings, through nature and the habits and friendships of his early life; but such tolerance does not prove insincerity in himself or his family.



Looking back through the vista of time on the progress real Christianity has in the period made, compared with the world's general progress, there is much to disappoint. Now, at a distance of three hundred years, the world's creeds are seen vying with each other as zealous claimants of the great poet as especially their own. Who can wonder at the laudable desire, seeing that not one word disrespectful towards any holy function or subject ever came from his pen? More than this—he speaks always with reverence of the teachers of the highest wisdom, by whatever name denominated. The holy father of Shottery Priory was availed of as imparting efficacious solemnity to his happy union with the loved one who at the end of life expressed the “earnest desire to be laid in the same grave with her husband.” Side by side, however, with any hopeful advance of peoples in religious charity, the deadly blots, as the fanatical hunting down of Richard King, the godly Bishop of Lincoln, are presented in our present time as a

melancholy set-off, an unrighteous squandering of money among hungry lawyers the food needed to win over to a knowledge of God the hundreds of thousands among our midst who know Him not. Let us continue in hope that out of evil good shall come, and that the examples of freedom from intolerance afforded by Shakespeare's writings shall have its effect on future generations. We see good Simon Hunt, his affectionate Dominie, the instructor of his school days, the mentor and guide of his early manhood, dwelling and working harmoniously side by side with his clerical

brother in the peaceful hamlet of Shottery, the love of their flocks being uppermost in both hearts. That Shakespeare was of full accord with the Reformed Church of England admits of no possible doubt. That he worshipped God in her holy temples, and according to her forms and ordinances, is of like certainty. His, of all others, was the mind to which her sublime liturgy would most commend itself. But he had no part with those who do not feel that the Almighty's grace to save is greater than sin. He would realize the right interpretation of the grandly charitable sentence of the Burial Service of the Church (alas! so frequently contorted and perverted), heraldic of its full and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life, and this without daring to set limits on a salvation purchased at such a cost. The after condition of humanity, we believe, in Shakespeare's mind, rested on his firm convictions of the reasonableness of eternal hope. He believed in God and a merciful Saviour's redemption to immortality. He knew and felt that only a living faith in a conviction of the truth in these most momentous of all questions can alone create so great a love that all life is permeated by that love and that belief. He saw a kinship between him and God his Saviour,

and that being in Him we cannot be taken away from Him without His losing a part of Himself. His belief in immortality was stronger than any disbelief, begotten of dogmas, in the eternal of evil. His belief in God's merciful goodness may prove a merciful cause of His inspiring even the worst of us with some feeble grain of goodness, and that this merest atom of good seed existing in the heart of the weakest and least unworthy of us all, may, under the divine mercy, so progress that in the end none but good seed shall prevail. Has he portrayed any fellow-creature without redeeming trait? The worst of us startle each other again and again with touches of tenderness, sudden returns to the simplicity and purity of childhood. Let us hope that out of this capability for good eternal good shall grow. He paved the way for the Robertsons, Kingsleys, Farrars, and the legion of like men of Christian charity yet to follow, who shall announce to the world that goodness is eternal, all-powerful, inexhaustible, and will in the end subdue. A Father Damien could never have dwelt among the outcast lepers, have tended and loved them as his own brothers and children, with his own hands have erected a temple in which, amid all their crushing visitation, they should glorify God and implore His mercy and submission to His will in their saddest lot, had his love and charity rested on any narrow basis unbegotten of God. More than all, after ten years of heart and soul devotedness to the poor outcasts, the fact that he himself had become a victim to the loathsome disease, and when the terrible truth had disclosed itself in its fullest horrors, yet even then to utter the exclamation that if he could be cured of his leprosy by quitting the island he would not go, is all but divine. Of this kind is the love and charity taught of Shakespeare, such we gather to have been his perfectitude of God's true priesthood here on earth, heavenly, indeed, in its foundation and practical application to suffering humanity in its saddest and most aggravated, hopeless form.

An interesting question arises at this point, as to the worldly means of the young couple, at this their outset in life. Young Will could estimate at fair value the importance of worldly welfare, and what, until now, continue to be termed, "prospects in life," as elements in the serious matter of marriage. He gives a very decided opinion on the subject in "The Winter's Tale," act iv., scene 3:—

"Prosperity's the very bond of love;
Whose fresh complexion and whose heart together
Affliction alters."

There is little doubt as to his having left the Grammar School at an age we in these days deem very early; but, looking more closely, and by the light of men now in their seventies, having regard to what was the usual habit of the time, down to within the



last sixty years, such is hardly the fact. The age of fourteen was, no longer than sixty years since, the usual age at which boys of the middle class were generally removed from school for apprenticeship in their future trade calling. Seven years was the usual indenture term, and both parents and sons, as well as employer, were anxious that the period of apprenticeship should not be prolonged beyond the age of twenty-one years. Now here we are afforded the strongest proof that Shakespeare underwent no apprenticeship whatever, and that the story as to his apprenticeship to a butcher is as unfounded as the other absurd stories regarding him that have been handed down, and swallowed as matter of fact, without any real ground for credence. No indenture has ever been found, no employer ever named, although every tradesman of prominence at the time had been numbered among the town councillors, and a man in the position held by his father would hardly indenture his son to one of the second class, whatever the calling. Apart from this, we know as a fact that he had quitted Stratford for London several years before any apprenticeship under the observed term of the time could possibly have expired.

In every feature of the matter, the balance of evidence favours his having acted as clerk-assistant in the office of Walter Roche, his earliest instructor in the Guild School. There are known to have been some half-dozen attorneys practising in the town at that time; one in particular acted for his father and the Hathaway family. Six lawyers in a place of

ASSOCIATESHIP WITH A STRATFORD

its size would have an active time in setting their fellow-townsmen by the ears sufficiently to yield a living for the whole six, and it is known to have been much given to litigation in those days. Either of the number, commanding his services, would derive no small advantage from what then, as now, is termed "connexion." Apart from young Will's talent in the office, we may rest assured that whatever he undertook would speedily bear the impress of his thought and action, and it is but reasonable to infer that a lawyer of clerical antecedents would remunerate him for services fairly, according to his ability and energy. The drudgery of a Stratford attorney's office, however, would hardly comport with the youthful poet's feelings; he submitted to its duties only until other and more congenial pursuit was secured. With a young wife and family at Shottery,

"on the road" would resort to him for their "taking" novelties, and from these he would "suck no small advantage."

Whole volumes, harping on the discordant string of pretended necessitous fleeing from a Lucy prosecution for deer-stealing, have from time to time appeared as explanations of Shakespeare's quitting his native town for London. All omit the true and obvious reason—i.e., the hitherto home sphere being altogether too cramped for genius knowing no bounds. His abiding in his birthplace could continue only during the educational period, or at longest until the money-earning capacity had developed to an extent rendering the step obviously wise and imperative. The wisest legal men who have examined this question with minute care and thought, agree that as a youth he possessed more than "a turn for law." The probability is that his



there would be no lack of exertion on his part. It is in no way stretching probability to say that at the time of his marriage Shakespeare was in receipt of no mean income from the production of original theatrical compositions suited to the then infant condition of the stage, or in working up into more acceptable form the rude subjects then presented to the new-created playgoers, who had already begun to evidence improving tastes. His income from these combined sources, even without any withdrawal of assistance to his parents, which, we may be assured was more than cheerfully rendered, would probably justify his union with Anne, more especially under joint residence in the Shottery homestead. His power and capability would not be slow of discovery and appreciation. The several bands of players then

first money earnings were acquired in copying legal documents for Stratford attorneys. Walter Roche, just at the time, had doffed the cassock for the more profitable occupation of setting by the cars or by legal process healing the wounds of his neighbours. None so well as he knew young Shakespeare's powers, and although not of an age to become a full-fledged attorney, yet our youthful genius, to whom the "quips and quirks" were all as nothing, would easily render himself more than a match for the most gifted or subtle of the craft then practising in Stratford. He would probably be an indispensable necessity to Roche. It is enough to advance that Bacon lived at the time, and with such example, who, or where, is the lawyer that would limit his knowledge of the science or its practice if needed?

Both prior and subsequent to their union in Shottery Manor Chantry, Shakespeare and Anne would often be found in the Old Manor House, where possibly their scheme for his removal to London was conceived. There is no need to fall back on any unfounded deer-stealing story and its asserted consequent prosecution by Sir Thomas Lucy; neither will we recur to the still more improbable statement as to his needing to hold horses in the public streets as a means of subsistence, inventions as weak and baseless as they are unjustifiable. He felt that, what was of utmost importance to a dramatic poet, London was the place of all others for the fullest

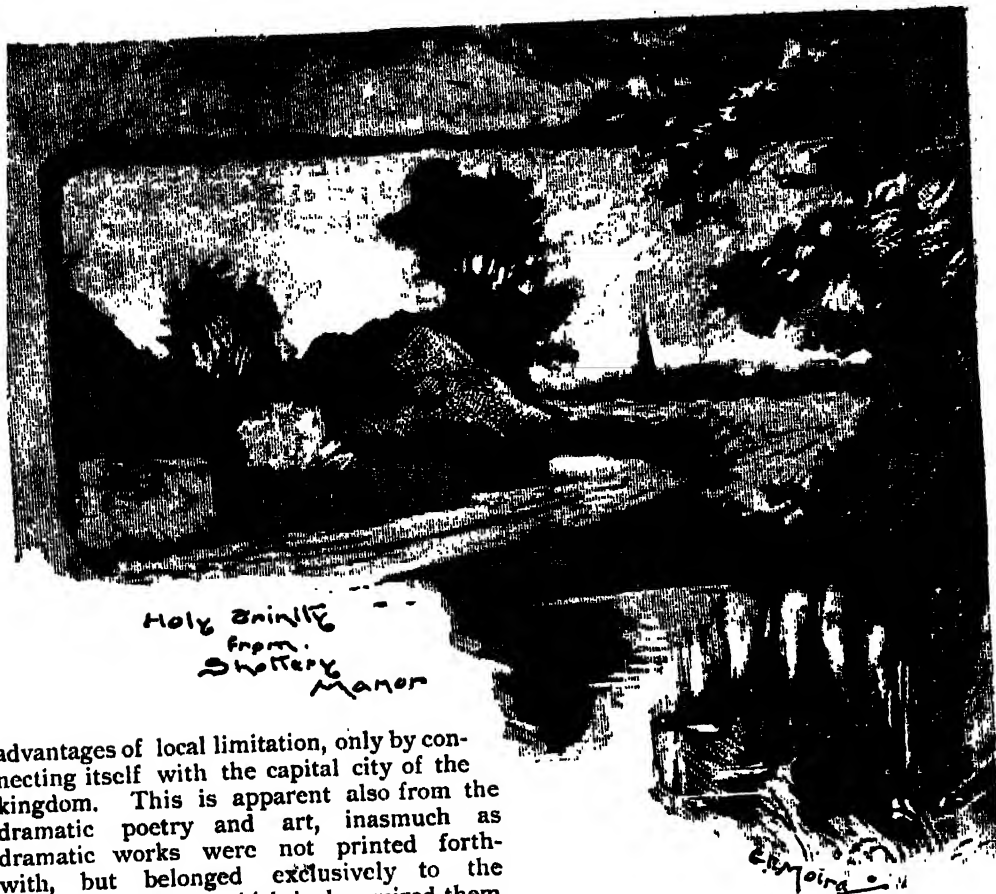
development of every individual feeling. Everyone there could assert himself in his own way, and prove his full individuality. Life there resembled the stage, then as now, more than we are any of us apt to see to be the case. That he knew the fact better than anyone then or since living is clear enough, and was not slow to take advantage of the intuition. The various professions were not overstocked, the difficulties to contend with not so great as now. Healthy, energetic impulse, successful undertakings, consciousness of the power of self, and a sturdy love of adventure, were the characteristic features of the time. As Hutton says,

"it was a joy to live, and Shakespeare had his full share of this joy of life." London was then the centre of all the intellectual life of the kingdom. London, as "Pierce Pennilesse," in the very day graphically put it, "London is the fountaine whose rivers flowe round about England." All eminent persons, or person desirous of occupying an eminent position in literature or poetry, and who will question Shakespeare's resolve in this matter, flocked to London, which in those days was a city of good proportions for such a confluence of intellect. There existed no possibility of any literary activity or of obtaining literary success in the provinces, for there were as yet no daily newspapers, or any other means of literary intercourse, such as nowadays at once communicate every achievement to the whole country and makes it the common property of the nation. Literary work, accordingly, was able to overcome or lessen the dis-



The annexed sketch of what is presumed to be weighing out the golden dot on the occasion of the marriage is from an old painting, believed to be of German or Dutch execution, presumably about the middle of the seventeenth century. In the left-hand corner of the picture are the words—

Rare lymnage with us doth make appere.
The marriage of Anne Hathaway and William Shakespere.



advantages of local limitation, only by connecting itself with the capital city of the kingdom. This is apparent also from the dramatic poetry and art, inasmuch as dramatic works were not printed forthwith, but belonged exclusively to the theatrical company which had acquired them by purchase. As Karle Elze expresses it, anyone desirous of advancing in his profession was obliged to go to London, and hence, towards the end of the sixteenth and at the beginning of the seventeenth century, we find there a brilliant assemblage of poets, actors, pamphleteers, and writers of all kinds such as has scarcely ever been equalled. National literature, in contradistinction to the classical literature of the Court, was in the ascendant; no wonder that it attracted the freshest, most energetic and vigorous intellects from every quarter.

It is now established with tolerable certainty that Shakespeare's quitting Stratford for London in 1586 was not his first journey thither. His father had at various times suits at law with fellow-townsmen, and, possibly, if he was associated in any way with the attorney acting for his father and the Hathaway family, he may have visited London should any proceedings have needed the presence of the conducting attorney. It is remarkable

that none of the biographers until now have more than slightly dwelt on John Shakespeare's suit with Lambert in relation to the Asbies estate, seeing how important a part it possibly played in the after fortunes of the family. Certain of these Lambert law suits bear in a most interesting manner on the Shakespeare-Lucy feud, out of which came the young poet's merciless holding up the gallant knight to the ridicule of all future generations. Never was there so dire a revenge! Instead of a deer-stealing matter, so favoured of all hitherto biographers, we may more correctly read that John Shakespeare was laudably desirous to recover possession of his estate of Asbies, which, in his earlier straits for money, had been mortgaged to one Lambert, but which mortgage he was willing to clear off by paying back the money advanced. This was refused on the ground that other moneys were owing, which latter state-

ment was a matter of contention. According to documentary evidence, Lambert somewhat illegally retained possession of Asbies, and refused to fulfil the conditions of the mortgage. In refutation of the many unfounded stories as to John Shakespeare's impecuniosity, it is clearly established beyond any possible doubt that he was promptly ready with the hard cash needed for the redemption, and would naturally be indignant with Sir Thomas Lucy, who, on an appeal to the Stratford authorities to recover his rightful possession, had, in his capacity of Justice of the Peace and President, sided strongly with the Lamberts, and had, as they regarded it, played falsely against the Shakespeare family in the case. Here we have a naturally true version of the quarrel. Instead of deer-stealing, we shall in future read "Opposition to restitution and an attempt to repress

wards by portrayal of his father's adversary with a withering power such as none but he possessed. So long as the world lasts, the Knight of Charlecote will be known as Shakespeare's Lucy, every generation of mankind will remember him; he passes down as unique; Warwickshire claims him as an integral part of its history.

In the charge brought against Lambert by the Shakespeares, it is stated that "the saide John Lambert denyed in all things, and did withstande them (viz., John and Mary Shakespeare) for entringe into the premises, and as yet doeth so contynewe still; and that by reason of certaine deedes and other evydences concerninge the premises, and that of righte belonge to your saide oratours are coume to the hands and possession of the saide premises from your saide oratours, and will in no wise permytt and suffer them

to have and enjoye the sayde premises according to their righte in and to the same." This is strong enough verbal indictment, and betrays an undercurrent of indignation against other than Lambert himself, especially if disregard be paid to further words of the document quoted, "Your saide oratours are of small wealthe and verey fewe frends and aliance in the said countie." Here we have a distinct hint at the Knight of Charlecote, and his associate county



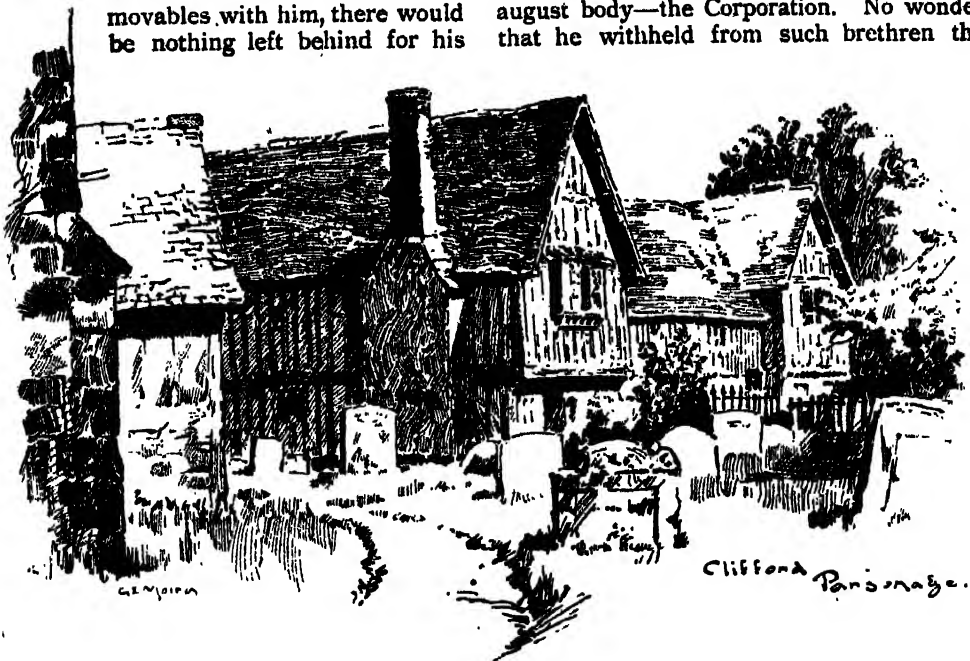
a family rising through power of gifted intellect united to moderate means, laboriously and honourably acquired, as against the paramount territorial Lucy lordship of the neighbourhood." John Shakespeare was not a man submissively to yield to the iron heel, or to be thus ridden over rough-shod; he possessed much firmness of character, and would resent the manifest injustice, founded as it was on the meanest jealousy, and accordingly dealt with it in his own way. These and other presumed acts of an overbearing nature such as we know were often perpetrated by the squirearchy of old, and are heard of occasionally even in these our own days, would not lose their bitterness in the mind of his son William, then an impressionable youth, resented soon after-

magnate Justices of the Peace and Rotulorum order, having with their long purses and influence with the town's folk and others arrayed themselves against the Shakespeares, driving them into the High Court of Chancery for hope of redress through it as the highest court of appeal. Lucy was clearly a moving spirit in keeping the Shakespeares out of the Asbies estate, as through the all-powerful influence over aldermanic tradesmen at his beck and call, he was able successfully to bring about a combination of interests, and worry and harass them in divers ways. Reading these occurrences fairly, they cannot fail to throw much new light on hitherto seeming obscure and improbable circumstances in the poet and his father's life. Lucy's success in drawing over his aldermen

JOHN SHAKESPEARE'S RESIDENCE IN CLIFFORD.

to side against the Shakespeares was most probably the reason why John Shakespeare ceased to attend the meetings of the Corporation, and in a spirit of hostility and retaliation refused to pay the taxes; he was disgusted with the whole body and their sycophancy to the lord of Charlecote, and so became indifferent to such civic associateship. The supposition that he retired to the country for some years will now be regarded as an undoubted fact, and as in all probability he would, on his removal out of the borough jurisdiction, carry all his household and other movables with him, there would be nothing left behind for his

Stratford, and thus preventing Lucy and his alderman adherents carrying out their intents, yet the removal thither was not with any intention of permanence. The *distringas* or warrant of distress against him which the officers of the law were prevented from executing as "John Shakespeare has nothing to distrain upon," was followed up by other malignant proceedings. A writ of *capias* was issued against him three several times within as many months, and he was thereupon declared to have forfeited his office of alderman on the plea that he had for some time failed to attend the meetings of that august body—the Corporation. No wonder that he withheld from such brethren the



Clifford Parsonage.

brother corporators to distrain upon and sell in liquidation of their rates claimed from him; to say the least, he would, by this flitting and transference of household effects, gain time for following up his law suit, and his opponents would need new processes through which to reach him.

Clifford, a prettily situated village within a mile and a half of Stratford, was the place selected for the family home at the most trying moment of the Lucys' warm espousal of the Lambert efforts to keep the Shakespeares from obtaining restitution of Asbies. It was close at hand, had the recommendation of healthfulness, utterly denied to Stratford, and, although for the moment availed of for a clearly temporary purpose, the prevention of seizure of goods under local jurisdiction of

light of his countenance. Then it occurred to him to shake the dust off his feet as a testimony against them and retire into other and more genial presence of true friends, the Rainsfords at Clifford. A writ of *habeas corpus* was issued against him, as is stated in some document of security for his brother Henry, and one Nicholas Lanc, believed to have been in the Lucy interest, is put forward in an action during 1587; but he appears to have got rid of all these side issues, which in all probability were creations for mere worry purposes. Amid all this din of law and seizures, we have the unquestionable fact that John Shakespeare was never dethroned, but that he continued in undisputed possession of his houses in Stratford, and that none of these were either

seized or sold. His removal into Clifford baffled his enemies to the extent designed: he was no longer a resident in the borough of Stratford, and hence the penalties and charges against him were, to a certain extent, issued in *contumacium*, but he would, and doubtless did pay his taxes there, instead of to the borough.

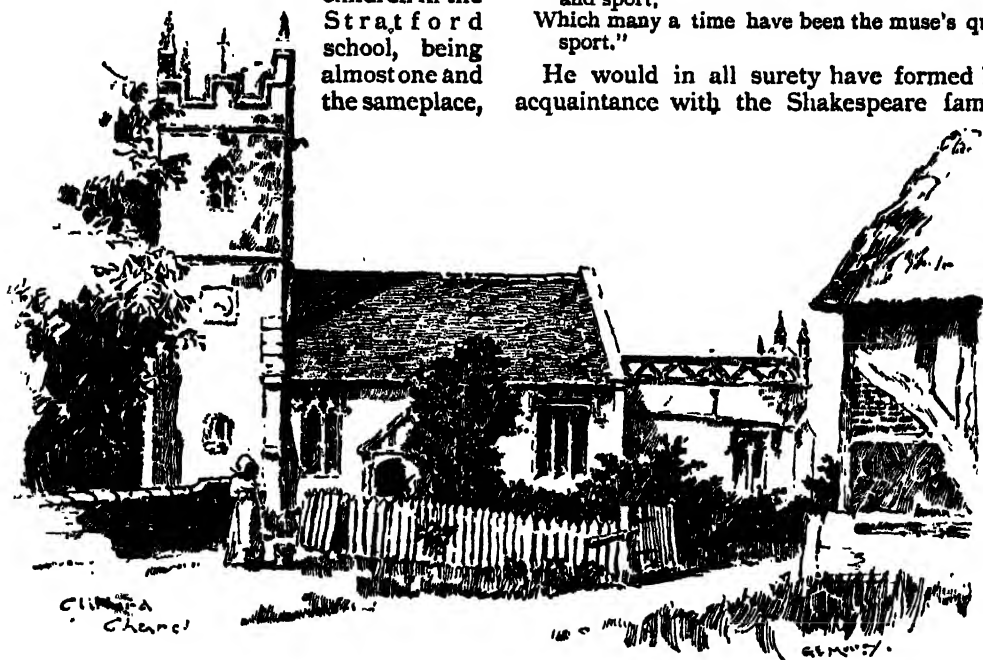
His interests and property were too closely identified with Stratford for him to have entertained any such resolve. Finding Clifford not only an agreeable home, but yielding all the advantages of carrying on the education of his children in the Stratford school, being almost one and the same place,

only a short time before had disputes resulting in law proceedings, in which latter the doughty knight, with his usual good fortune, had triumphed. The Rainsfords had a boy attending Stratford Grammar School with the boy Shakespeare, who would be William's companion at morn and even, going to and returning from lessons.

This same family of Rainsford were close friends of the poet Drayton—also a Warwickshire man. We know from his *Polyolbion*, that he was in the habit of spending whole summers with them at Clifford:

"Near of dear Clifford's seat, the place of health and sport,
Which many a time have been the muse's quiet sport."

He would in all surety have formed his acquaintance with the Shakespeare family



he remained there for a period of four years, *i.e.*, from 1579 until 1583. The poet would during the whole of this time be resident with his parents, having been seven years of age at the time of the removal to Clifford, and eleven years when, in 1583, they returned to Henley Street. The close proximity to Stratford and its school was, however, not the only matter which operated in its selection for what was at the moment deemed a temporary home. John Shakespeare had sympathizing friends in the Rainsford family, then resident at Clifford, and who were distantly related to the Ardens (Mary's family), and who, in all probability, were suggestors and aiders in the step as discomfiting the Knight of Charlecote, with whom they likewise had

on occasions of these sojourns in the same village, possessed of charms for both, and which must have commenced while the poet was yet a boy, increasing as the talent of his youthful acquaintance developed, and continually increasing from year to year, for we know he later on became a frequent guest at New Place, after both writers had attained celebrity. That it was continuous, and had ripened into more than friendship, is abundantly evident in the fact of Dr. Hall, Shakespeare's son-in-law, having been Drayton's medical attendant.

Charles Knight always expressed himself satisfied that John Shakespeare, the poet's father, did make his home at Clifford, as here stated. Haliwell Phillips was

of contrary opinion, on the ground that the Shakespeares known as living there during the years named married in 1560, and, therefore, could not have been the poet's father. This objection does not hold good, inasmuch as the name of Shakespeare other than John's family had for years previous been known in that district just outside Stratford (coming originally from Alcester), and had proved source of confusion with the Shakespeare genealogists.

A step of so great uncertainty as Shakespeare's embarkation in the enterprise of quitting his Stratford home for the unknown great world of London, however great his own confidence and convictions of success in the venture, could not fail to have been



fraught with deep anxiety to all he would leave behind in his Shottery home. His reliance on his own mental powers and business capability would, doubtless, serve on the trying occasion; the natural timidity of his young wife, unversed in the affairs of the outer world, would call for the exercise of all his persuasiveness and power of consolation. A determined effort to achieve independence, however helpful in proving a stimulus to the resolve, could not mitigate the serious aspect of the venture, or lessen the deep thoughtfulness naturally attaching to the occasion. The good curate, Simon Hunt, who dwelt close by at Luddington, and who, in all trials and

emergencies had ever been a faithful friend, would be constantly at hand to impart wise counsel and strength in the hour of Anne's trial; more than he, she would have a fond mother ever at her side to impart comfort; above all, her simple unfaltering trust in God would sustain her in the parting. The period of absence from his wife and little ones was impossible of definition. Letter communications were usually conveyed by private carriers travelling on foot. These unofficial messengers were so irregular and uncertain as to defy computation as to time of effecting interchange of communications. Such foot messengers had each their own circle of friends and customers in London and *en route*, and were expected upon every journey to call upon the whole round, delivering and receiving letters, and attending to the execution of commission purchases of such nature as were within the power of their personal bearing. A period of three to four days was usually occupied in making the journey each way, and a like time in the London collection and delivery, so that a reply to a communication could hardly under most favourable circumstances be received in less than a fortnight. In wet seasons it was much longer. Indeed, when floods prevailed, the roads, which for a large portion of the distance were nothing more than horse tracks entirely open on each side, were impassable for foot passengers, who formed the larger number of travellers, and frequently defied the power of the pack-horses, then the only means of transport of commodities exceeding the power of human back-bearing endurance. Seeing that the poet would need frequent interviews with the London theatrical managers, and possibly required to be in almost daily communication with printers, it would appear to have been matter of impossibility for him to have remained longer at such a highly inconvenient distance from the scene where his labours were brought into action, hence every cogent reason for the removal. It is most likely that his visits to his wife and children at the Shottery home were not infrequent. These journeys to and fro would be accomplished on horseback, means for which were not so difficult as may seem. These journeys between Stratford and London, occupied under favourable weather auspices three days, and were by no means unpleasant, especially in summer time, when the number of business and pleasure joint male and

female riders was considerable. The wardrobes were necessarily limited. Such damsels as required more than one dress, and the merest change of under-garments, had to send forward their superfluity by pack-horse. Stratford men, who at the time seem to have been much given to law, were frequently called to London to attend the higher courts in connection with legal proceedings. An authority of the time says: "People must come to London for their law." According to an entry in the accounts of the Chamberlain of Stratford for the year 1599, twelve shillings were paid to Bailiff Sturly for a six days' journey to London, where he had to appear as witness in an action against Mr. Underhill. Post-horses were easy of hire throughout the route, the demand being considerable, those for the upward journey being quickly required for like return purpose to the limit points of defined distance travels, for the doing which the charges were moderate. Ladies desirous of accompanying their lords, as also young damsels wishful of seeing the wonders of London, had to mount these steeds behind their husbands or cavaliers, holding on, as was generally the fashion to a leather belt, known as riding "pillion," or frequently with young folks to a bright-coloured, elegantly tasselled silken circlet, girdled round the male waist for safety grip of his fair companion, and on which the frequency and force of tug would in no slight degree depend on special circumstances of relationship affecting the mind and will of the varying equestrians; a mode of joint equestrianism which continued down to about the year 1800.

Whenever horse shifts had to be made, accommodation for the ladies riding a pillion was provided by the erection of stone steps at the wayside inn doors, so that the feminine alight and remount could be comfortably effected in becoming grace and elegance. So bad, however, was the condition of the roads in places, that in wet weather, or when snow



was on the ground, guides had to be employed to lead the horses and pilot the way where the boughs of trees and warn poles usually stuck in the ground as land-marks to indicate the roadway, or as warnings against fathomless abysses, had disappeared. Some of the more noted critical causeways were at times fraught with much peril, none more so than the Avon at Stratford. In endeavours to ford this river, notoriously given to sudden heavings and swellings, many terrible calamities were continually occurring. On either bank, where now stands the noble Clopton Bridge, the instances of men and horses borne out of their depths and drowned were frequent; so also at other points, where, after heavy rains, a sudden rush of water from the hills would gorge the river and cause peril, and oftentimes death, to venturesome youths of both sexes, boastful of their powers of crossing on horseback under these and such like hazardous conditions. There were points in the road subject to the division of the track consequent on the pack horse traffic having worn, seemingly bottomless pits which rendered the usual, track unavailable. It was not uncommon for these deceptive chasms to be three or more feet deep, and this fearful ocean of mire from which there existed no visible means of extrication, oftentimes extended for more than a hundred yards. Woe to the horseman and worse to the pillion-loving damsel who allowed betrayal into any such veritable Slough of Despond! The case was hopeless.

so far as any pursuance of journey on the same overburdened steeds was concerned. Extrication from the mortifying and oftentimes dangerous position was matter of more than difficulty. First and foremost the lady had to be cared for, and, lacking other available help, her companion cavalier had to embed himself waist deep in the mire and bear his fair burden on his shoulders to some position of *terra firma*; the poor animal, who had vainly struggled for advance, being secure of immobility through the depth and consistence of the mud, which had so effectually caused the journey halt. The animals on these occasions often had their legs so difficult of extrication as to need a machine of the lever kind kept for the purpose to raise their bodies out of the abyss, in which they would, but for its aid, inevitably have perished. Despite these and other such road-voyaging

hazards and trials, there attached a fascination around all such romantic progresses from the various country towns as caused a development at times into what was known and characterized as the "pillion complaint." Parties of friends and relatives would set out in companies, Canterbury pilgrim fashion, though shorn of its religious aspect, oftentimes so numerous as would exceed the capability of the roadside inns to provide horse power. The young folks looked forward to these romantic expeditions as the exciting event of their lives; and many a love match grew out of these pillion horseback close contacts, so eminently suited to develop into tender friendships. The varying incidents of such cavalcades afforded gossip throughout the respective neighbourhood for many an otherwise dreary and monotonous winter night. The conditions of the public highway we have

described are in no degree exaggerated, as is proved by the public statutes of the period, which show that the old roads had frequently to be "abandoned and new tracks struck out." One of these says, "many of the wayes are so depe and noyous by wearyng and course of water and other occasions that people cannot have their passages by horses uppon or by the same, but to their great paynes, perill, and jeopardie." Be it remembered that Queen Elizabeth, who at this period governed her realm with such marvellous ability under the difficulties of being kept apart, as it were, from her people, by reason of road inaccessibility, was a noted horse pillionist, making most of her journeys after such fashion. Did not this redoubtable sovereign of England ride into the City of London on a pillion, behind her Lord Chancellor, in the presence of multitudes of her loyal subjects? True it is the realm afterwards gave her a coach, but Her Majesty never took kindly to the "un-



Back
Entrance
Shottenham

worthy machine," and in one of the first audiences given to the French ambassador in 1568, she feelingly described to his Excellency, "the aching pains she was suffering in consequence of being knocked about in that coach." How forcibly should these callings back to days of yore remind our own generation of the inestimable blessings vouchsafed to the multitudes scattered far and wide over the globe surface, territorially as numerically tenfold those of her predecessor, under the benign sceptre of Our Sovereign Lady Queen and Empress Victoria, blessed of God in all the desirable attributes of governing possessed by England's Ruler of the sixteenth century, and moreover endowed with those womanly qualities and graces which have built her into the hearts of the humblest as well as the most exalted among her peoples.

Upon Shakespeare's arrival in London in 1586, he took at once to the theatre, having entered on his change of life with the object of connecting himself with it as writer and adapter of plays, or as an actor, or in a capacity uniting these several occupations. There is every likelihood that, prior to his quitting his native town, and even before his marriage, he had, as already shown, been engaged in adapting writings of authors most familiar to him, into representations such as in his then light suited the assemblages gathering at the Grammar School. The managers of the respective companies recognised at once his great aptitude. In after life, it will be seen that everything he touched turned seemingly to gold, and the ruling lights of the troupe, finding that his pieces, whether original or adapted, "drew" more numerous and paying audiences than any other playmaker, preferred his *rôle* and *repertoire*, and were willing to pay him, as they doubtless did liberally, for whatever he worked out for their stage and scenic popularity performance. What need is there to make out that he held horses outside the theatre doors, or any other such mean employment, or that when admitted within the walls it was as call-boy or "servitor" to some actor? These miserable surmises are unworthy the writers who, in this our own time, continue to give them currency. We do not mean to assert that Shakespeare, on his first going to London, took a prominent position as an actor. No-



Old
Dole Colt
Shakespeare Manor

thing of the sort. He went up for a more extended, and, therefore, more money-making prosecution of the calling he had on a small scale wrought out and pursued at Stratford, Leicester, and Coventry, as adapter and possibly stage manager to one or each of the several companies, known to him at these town exhibitions so close to his then home. Then, as now, highly-gifted men have held the position of stage manager, and through their prescience wealth has rolled into the companies' coffers. Each and all these troupes took their turn of playing in London, the success of every thing bearing his handiwork would soon become known among them, and they would resort to him as the young fellow who, greatly above all others, knew what best suited the taste of the hour and drew coin into their coffers. Young Shakespeare was their man, and as he and Sweet Anne were likely to be blessed with a full quiver, it was best for him to be close to the region where there was most to be gained rather than continue in the humbler field of Shottery, communication with which

was matter of infrequency, and involved at least a fortnight in achievement. There was a double call for removal to the wider sphere. Only a few years before he went to London, the players had been banished from the city by a despotic edict of the Lord Mayor and Corporation, yet out of that very act of intolerance, which had the direct sanction of the Government, grew up a great glory of Elizabeth's reign. By banishing the players, the Lord Mayor called into existence that cordon of theatres which shortly afterwards enclosed what was known as London proper; the players being driven from within the walls, resolved to build playhouses with-



Shakespeare's Manor

out. The Tabard, The White Hart, and other inn theatres, with their open courts, shared with the Globe and other theatres on the Southwark side in the prosperity accruing through the city inhabitants being, for the time, driven over London Bridge in pursuit of the kind of recreation then developing as suited to their needs and tastes.

The condition of the stage, as Shakespeare found it, was peculiar. The mysteries and moralities had not yet altogether gone out; they were still acted by parish clerks, and, like the old drama of Brittany, and of China and Japan, since known to us in England, they would last several days. One is mentioned

in an old survey of London which lasted eight days, the action beginning with the creation. The chief dramatic writers who preceded and were in possession of the stage when Shakespeare appeared in London were Lily, Peele, Green, and Marlowe, the last three of whom were called in the satires of the day "the University pens," from interlarding their plays with Latin, and exhibiting their learning much at the cost of dramatic truthfulness. "They smelt too much of that writer Quid," said a jester of the time, "and of that writer Metamorphosis, and talk too much of Proserpine and Jupiter. Why, here's our fellow Shakespeare can put them all down—aye, and Ben Jonson, too." The jester was right. The youthful genius of Stratford, who had already become known as writer of more than one popular adaptation, needed no classic foundation for his pieces, plain English in its utmost vigour was at his finger-ends. Like a John Bright of our present day, he could discourse them in the tongue they knew so well, and would frame representations of scenes appealing to their imaginations through direct associations rather than a second-hand classic hazy basis. Here we see true biography, and of the best: extreme diligence in his calling, proper zeal to earn the means of providing for his family, left behind in peaceful Shottery, not forgetting his honoured parents then living in the old Henley Street home. His proved discharge of these all-important duties would yield but scant time for any pursuits out of which life-making, according to the ideas of complaining biographers, could be afterwards founded. No truer life can be desired.



AN OLD BIT OF SHOTTERY.



Bits
of a
Scandinavian
Cottage

THE LUDDINGTON MARRIAGE.



THE story of the love and marriage of the young couple, shorn of the innumerable imaginings with which the swarm of writers have surrounded it, is simple enough. First of all, regard must be had to the circumstances of the bride and her family. Anne's father, "Richard

Hathaway, alias Gardiner, de Shottery," had died at least three months before his daughter's marriage. Haliwell Phillips discovered Richard Hathaway's will in the Prerogative Court in London. It was drawn up on the 1st of September, 1581, and legally confirmed on the 9th July, 1582, so that the testator must have died towards the end of June. Seven out of nine children are mentioned, Bartholomew, Thomas, John, William, Agnes, Catherine, and Margaret, thus leaving Anne and Joan unmentioned. Bartholomew as the eldest, and with the mother's express con-

sent, is referred to with special favour, and inherits, as was too much the custom in those days, the principal part of the property; he, in conjunction with his mother, is to attend to the produce of the land; the two bondsmen, Fulk Sandells and John Rychardson, are both mentioned, the first as a neighbour and "supervisor of this my last will and testament," the other as a witness; one John Hemyng being also a witness. The testator's property was considerable, more than amply sufficient to place his house on a par with the Shakespeare family so far as worldly means were con-



cerned. The daughters, however, each received only a legacy of 20 nobles, i.e., £6 13s. 4d.; this was to be paid to Agnes and Catherine at their marriage, whereas Margaret was to receive her portion on attaining her seventeenth year. Richard Hathaway's death is not entered in



the church register, a by no means strange omission, inasmuch as many other equally substantial residents share such neglect. Bartholomew, according to a document in the Shakespeare Museum at Stratford, came into the possession of the estate at Shottery in 1610, and died in 1624, leaving the poet's son-in-law, Dr. Hall, one of his executors, thereby evidencing that the Hathaway and Shakespeare families continued living as neighbours and relatives on terms of closest family intimacy, and, we may say, affection. There is no sort of possible question of Anne's father being all that has been stated and more than "a substantial yeoman," as Rowe styled him, proved by his Shottery home and surrounding lands. The long residence, now divided into three tenements, was then but one farm-house, and conformed to a superior or first-class homestead of the time. Some of the smaller cottages in close proximity would be the homes of labourers in Richard Hathaway's employment, who, from the extent of his acres and style of residence was probably the leading freeholder and farmer of the village.

The old Luddington Parish Registers no longer exist to yield evidence of Shakespeare's union with Anne Hathaway. All we know as matter of certainty is that two friends accompanied the intended bride and bridegroom to Worcester, the seat of the diocese in which Stratford is situated, and there entered into a bond for the security of the bishop in licensing "William Shagspere and Ann Hathaway" to be married after only one proclamation of banns. The bond is preserved in the Consistorial Registry at Worcester, and is dated November 28th, 1582. Notwithstanding the most diligent search of parish registers

no entry of the marriage has yet been found. It did not take place at Stratford, or its register, so admirably kept and carefully preserved, would record it. Luddington is the church most favoured by tradition as the village in whose holy place the marriage was solemnized; but its early registers were burned in a drunken row at a harvest home, at a date prior to the interest and eagerness being manifested to ascertain facts in the life of the great author. The church Bible well-nigh shared the same fate, having been rescued from the flames: it is now in the vestry of the new church. The old church fell into ruins about a century ago. It was, in all probability, in this church that the poet's marriage with Anne was solemnized. There is a tradition to that effect existing in the neighbourhood; indeed, it amounts to a general belief. The then Vicar of Luddington had been Head Master of the Guild Grammar School when Shakespeare was educated there: this in itself should account for the selection. The Luddington Church of Shakespeare's day has long become only of the past. Until within a few years, however, a most unecclesiastical relic, a portion of the old fabric, though difficult of definition, remained. A sketch of the old, as also of the present new church, is subjoined. The new building is a gem, designed by John Cotton, of Birmingham, and much ornamented by John Baldwin, of Luddington, a most liberal benefactor.

Consequent on the absence of all documentary evidence to trace where the church ceremony of Shakespeare's marriage took place, the writers who have shown so great zeal in shadowing his character unwarrantably point to this as establishing secrecy in the matter. Numerous places aspire to the honour of having had the wedding ceremony in their church, but the circumstances of the case point to Luddington as clearly the most probable. First, it was in the parish of both parties, secondly, they could walk over the fields without any parade through Stratford, and thus avoid scandal talk of over puritanical folk, questioners of the previous "handfast," and we may be sure Sweet Anne was not without envious female friends, probably her juniors, among the more scrupulous members of her husband's family and her own female acquaintance. Young Will would be known as possessing great abilities, for even at that early age he must have been earning what in such a place would be

regarded as a large income, possibly beyond the capability of any other young fellow in the town. They had both been contented with the earlier formal betrothal as binding solemnly on their consciences, the more so as generally looked upon in the same light, yet would naturally prefer that no fuss or parade should be made over the church ratification, in order that this second ceremony should be shorn of everything that could by scandal whisperers be represented as detracting from the legal obligation of the previous "Chantry handfasting" ceremony. Luddington was close at hand; good Simon Hunt, the respected minister, had been his schoolmaster at the Guild Grammar School, and knew all the circumstances of the earlier betrothal. He was curate of Luddington; a good churchman was he, and would not fail in keeping alive the demands of conscience that the Shottery Chantry "handfasting" needed the rite of Mother Church to make it what it should be religiously, and would naturally appreciate the powers of his promising pupil as foreshadowing a great future as an author, knowing that he had already manifested high order of ability in the adaptation of theatrical pieces for the several companies of players by whom he had thus early in his career been employed. In all likelihood the young couple, immediately on the handfasting, took up their quarters in the Hathaway family home, which would afford ample accommodation, and probably continued to abide there until after the birth of their twin children, notably until the way had been opened for his migration to the great field of London. It would be the natural desire of Anne's widowed mother that the young people should make the old home their quarters, more especially as he would shortly be venturing on the sea of London, leaving his wife and family behind until the curtain which obscured the future should be lifted and his plans become more matured. What home so fitting during such period of doubt and uncertainty? We feel assured that William was living in the Hathaway homestead at Shottery with Anne, his wife, at the time of celebrating the marriage in church, possibly immediately on her Chantry handfasting, and they would thus be enabled to sally forth and return, without the more distant Stratford neighbours knowing that Pastor Simon Hunt had that morning bestowed upon them his blessing, and shielded their hoped-for offspring from the unmerited cruel remarking of a harsh-judging, censorious world. Let us rather admire

Will and Anne's courage and Christian course in renewing their vows in God's Holy Church. Luddington Church registers were destroyed, hence the marriage cannot be proved to have taken place in it; looking, however, at all the circumstances, there is little or no doubt of Luddington bearing the palm.

In Shakespeare's day it often occurred that, previous to any marriage rite in the church, there was a previous betrothal or espousal before witnesses, which in those times was regarded as a valid marriage, provided the ratification of the union by the rites of the Church took place within a reasonable time afterwards.

This undertaking of betrothal known in the time in which it existed as a common and frequent practice, especially in certain districts of England, notably in Warwickshire, Gloucestershire, Wiltshire, and other counties, was a ceremony frequently enacted with much formality, generally with the immediate concurrence of the parents on both sides, although frequently conducted

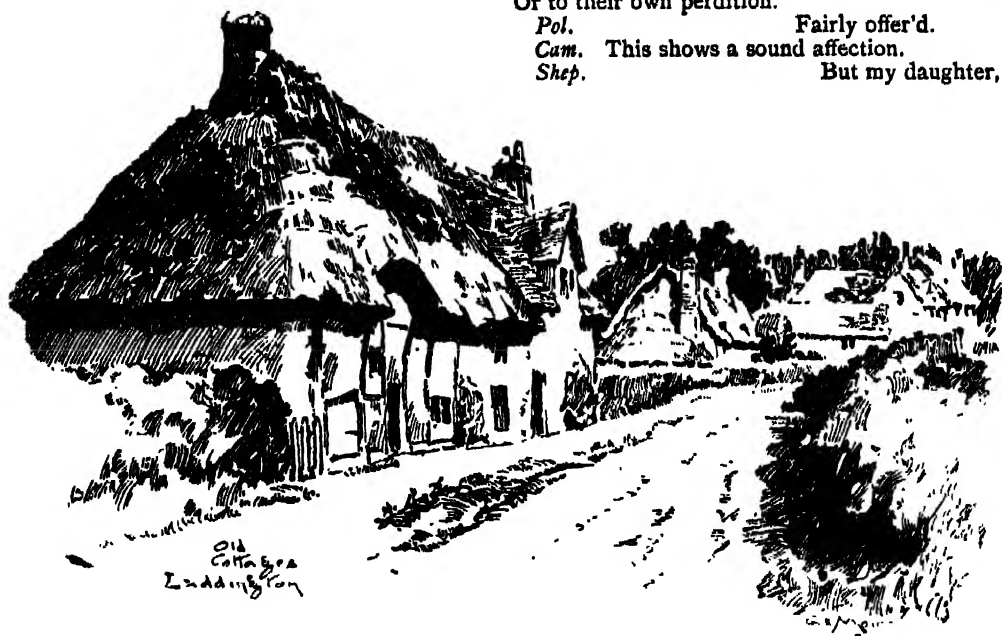


separately by the betrothing parties; evidence of the fact, communicated by them to independent persons, having been held in Warwickshire to confer a sufficient legal validity on the transaction. A case in point is afforded, as occurring in 1585, in the very village of Snitterfield where Shakespeare's father was born. William Holder and Alice

Also in "Measure for Measure" (act iv., scene 1) the Duke, disguised as a friar, induces Mariana to represent Isabella on the occasion of the latter's proposed nocturnal visit to Angelo, by referring to the pre-contract between them :—

"He is your husband on a pre-contract :
To bring you thus together, 'tis no sin ;
Sith that the justice of your title to him
Doth flourish the deceit."

In "Twelfth Night" (iv. 3 and v. 1) the solemnity of the betrothal is enhanced by the presence of a priest :—



"A contract of eternal bond of love,
Confirm'd by mutual joinder of your hands,
Attested by the holy close of lips,
Strengthen'd by interchangement of your rings :
And all the ceremony of this compact
Seal'd in my function, by my testimony."

We may be sure that if his own betrothal to Sweet Anne in the very early days of his own manhood was after this manner, it was uppermost in his thoughts when penning this beautiful passage in the "Winter's Tale" :—

Florizel. O, hear me breathe my life
Before this ancient sir, who, it would seem,

Hath sometime loved : *I take thy hand ; this hand,
As soft as dove's down, and as white as it :
Or Ethiopian's tooth, or the fann'd snow,
That's bolted by the northern blasts twice o'er.*

Polixenes. What follows this ?—
How prettily the young swain seems to wash,
The hand was fair before !—I have put you out :—
But, to your protestation ; let me hear
What you profess.

Flo. Do, and be witness to't.

Pol. And this my neighbour too ?

Flo. And he, and more
Than he, and men ; the earth, the heavens, and all :
That, were I crown'd the most imperial monarch,
Thereof most worthy ; were I the fairest youth
That ever made eye swerve ; had force and
knowledge

More than was ever man's, I would not prize them
Without her love : for her, employ them all ;
Commend them, and condemn them, to her service,
Or to their own perdition.

Pol. Fairly offer'd.

Cam. This shows a sound affection.

Shep. But my daughter,

Say you the like to him ?

Per. I cannot speak
So well, nothing so well ; no, nor mean better :
By the pattern of mine own thoughts I cut out
The purity of his.

Shep. Take hands, a bargain ;
And, friends unknown, you shall bear witness to't :
I give my daughter to him, and will make
Her portion equal his.

Flo. O, that must be
I' the virtue of your daughter : one being dead,
I shall have more than you can dream of yet ;
Enough then for your wonder. But, come on,
Contract us, 'fore these witnesses.

Shep. Come, your hand :
And, daughter, yours.



A HAPPY UNION.



HEY whose ingenuity has been exercised mainly in attributing to the great author the meaner and worst qualities of poor human nature urge, as convincing proof, that Shakespeare's affection did not hold "the bent," that he settled in London and left his wife in Stratford, visiting her only once a year. One biographer wickedly states that he never sent her a penny of his earnings (a clear case of unrequited love), but spent them in the delights and dissipations of metropolitan life.

In confirmation, his last will and testament is brought forward, in which he leaves no word of love for his wife, and bequeaths to her only his "second-best bed." The sonnets, too, which seem to be true records and very issues of his life, are made to indicate that there was some coldness and estrangement between them, and are shown to speak also of the "disgraces" and "blots" that cling to him as the results of his "old offences of affections." Lacking anything truthful in shape of the follies and weaknesses usually attaching to frail humanity chargeable to him, his earliest biographers, unable to appreciate the great gulf subsisting, and which ever must exist between him and any other author that had ever lived, or as would almost seem is ever likely to exist, were placed in the difficulty of utter silence, and for the best of all reasons—nothing was known—nothing could be known. It did not comport with their ideas of biography that he should pass thus vacantly down to time, and yet, even at his death, there were not wanting great men to realize that he was, and ever would remain, for all time. Hiring gossips of secondary worth, utterly unreliable, were therefore deputed to seek stories detractive from the high moral character, sweet disposition and goodness of nature known as Shakespeare's marked characteristics. In despair of finding such, invention was resorted to; hence the butcher-boy apprenticeship, the pretended fleeing from Stratford consequent on deer-stealing, the horse-holding at theatre doors, Davenant scandal, the various drunken debaucheries, ending in consequent premature death. All emanate from one and the self-same reckless and unfounded source; the only marvel is, that so many editions of his works as have appeared since their publicity should have been disgraced in the repetition of such inconsistent fables. "Garrulous Aubrey" was sent on the tramp of discovery, and among his inventions an anecdote told of him in this connexion is to the effect that Shakespeare, on his journeys to and from London, used to put up at the Crown Inn at Oxford. The innkeeper, John Davenant, and his wife were very fond of him, and he stood godfather to their son William. The wicked world intimated that there was something more than friendship between the poet and the witty Mrs. Davenant. One day, as William was running home in haste, some one asked him why he ran so. He replied that he wished to see his

godfather, who had just arrived. "You're a good boy," retorted his interrogator, "but you ought not to take the name of God in vain." Such a palpable slander carries its denial with it to every reflective mind.

But, if there were errors and blemishes (and who of us are free of these?), we know with what sorrow and contrition he regarded them. It is strange that to so few poets fate grants the personal realization of the domestic bliss of which they are the inspired prophets and apostles. It may be true that persons of fine imaginations are apt to be deceived in this matter of love. The object is illuminated with beams borrowed from their own minds; it floats before them in a light "that never was the sea or land." To a spectator who is "fancy free," it would seem as if Puck had anointed their eyelids, that they discover so much beauty in that coarse mark. The enchantments are laid thickly on. There is a tendency, even in the most prosaic, to idealize the objects of its idolatry. The most homely face is transfigured by the warm atmosphere of friendship; and there is absolutely no form or feature that does not appear beautiful when seen in "the purple light of love." Perhaps the deception arises from a wise co-working of the mental and emotional faculties; a charitable illusion, framed by the intellect as a justification of the foolishness of the heart. Emerson defines love as one of the most "beneficent illusions of sentiment and of the intellect"; an illusion "which attributes to the beloved person all which that person shares with his or her family, sex, age, or condition; nay, with the human mind itself." All beautiful and divine qualities appear to him entwined in that form, and his beatitude depends upon continuing in the fascination. Possibly, with Shakespeare, the charms of metropolitan beauty and splendour may have tended to modify the spell, the bright rays of the city and of the Court may in a degree have dissolved the mirage that had filled the atmosphere of his youthful affection. He may have discovered that the loveliness of the landscape and the glories of the sky did not all hang like a translucent picture in his chamber window. But such a disenchantment may have come without doing any affright to the gentle and abiding spirit of love that nestled in the quiet recesses of his soul.

Authors will in some way introduce themselves in their books, as Goldsmith does in "The Vicar of Wakefield." Even

Milton's matrimonial troubles crop out in "Paradise Lost," as may be seen by the following lines:—

"This mischief had not then befall'n,
And more that shall befall; for either
He shall never find outfit mate, but such
As some misfortune brings him, or mistake,
Or whom he wishes most shall seldom gain
Through her perverseness, but shall see her
gained
By far worse: or his happiest choice too late,
Shall meet already linked and wedlock
bound."

In the same manner the Shakespearean dramas contain occasional allusion to domestic troubles which are represented by some as verified in the history of the Stratford youth. In the "Two Gentlemen of Verona," Proteus thus discourses to Valentine—

"As in the sweetest bud
The eating canker dwells, so eating love
Inhabits in the finest wits of all."

To this sentimentalism Valentine replies—

"As the most forward bud
Is eaten by the canker ere it blow,
Even so by love the young and tender wit
Is turned to folly; blasting in the bud,
Losing his verdure even in the prime,
And all the fair effects of future hopes "



It is urged that, as, when only eighteen, he married a mature maiden of twenty-seven, it is probable that he chafed under the disproportion between them. In "Twelfth Night," this point of disparity of years is pressed with an earnestness that springs, we are told, from bitter personal experience. In the

beautiful scene where Viola, disguised as a page, enters into conversation with the Duke, of whom she is enamoured, and receives from him this general advice—

"Let still the woman take
An elder than herself; so
wears she to him,
So sways she level in her
husband's heart."

Domestic troubles are set forth in a more apparent manner in "As You Like It," where Shakespeare is alleged as personated by Touchstone. The latter is the fool, and wears cap and bells, but he is really the wit of the entire piece, thus recalling the author's words in another play:—

"This fellow's wise enough to play the
fool,
And to do that well craves a kind of art.
He must observe their mood on whom
he jests,
The quality of persons and the time.
This is a practice
As full of labour as a wise man's art."

Shakespeare's marriage, it is urged by many, was compulsive and unhappy, and that an allusion to this is found in the words spoken by Jaques to the different lovers at the close of the play:—

"You (*to Orlando*) to a love that your true
faith doth merit.
You (*to Oliver*) to your land and love,
and great allies.
And you (*to Touchstone*) to wrangling;
for thy loving voyage
Is but for two months victuall'd."

If it be true, as Bacon says, that a man finds himself ten years older the day after his marriage, this sudden maturity would nearly equalize the matter and keep the balance true. The speech of Hermia's lover, Lysander, has often been quoted to prove the infelicity of his wedded life; because one of the reasons given why "the course



The
Aven
N.
Lundin 1811.

of true love never did run smooth" is that it is "misgraffed in respect of years."

"Midsummer Night's Dream" was written in the early part of Shakespeare's life. The time comes, however, to give up frequent journeys between London and Stratford. Prudent business habits had secured large competence, and he desired to rest in his loved Stratford home. No doubt he intended to revisit the metropolis, but his untimely death shattered all such plans. Coming back, and being no Puritan, he may conscientiously have felt that Anne had acquitted herself much better than he in every point of duty. His son (Hamnet) is dead, but the daughters are all grown up and in reputable condition. He builds a house for them, qualms of conscience prompting towards his wife some act of condonement, and having ridiculed her in an early play, he makes the *amende* by embodying a portrait of her character in the unfortunate heroine of "Henry VIII." Such a view would lead to the words uttered by Queen Katharine, and however simple in the world's ways and knowledge, compared with himself, Anne might have been, she may have expressed the same idea:—

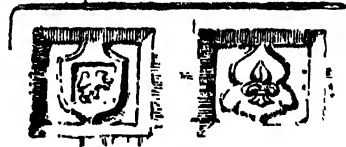
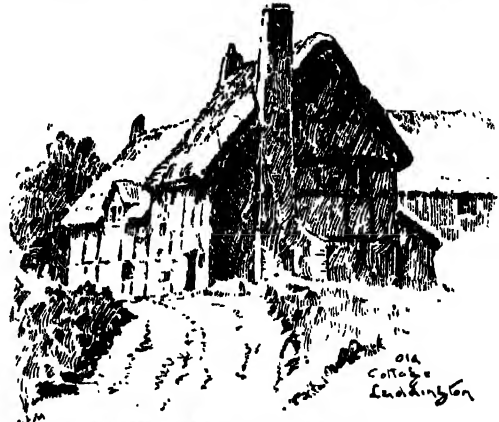
"Sir, I desire you do me right and justice;
And to bestow your pity on me: for
I am a most poor woman. Heaven witness
I have been to you a true and humble wife,
At all times to your will conformable;
... Sir, call to mind
That I have been your wife, in this obedience,
Upward of twenty years. If, in the course
And process of this time, you can report,
And prove it, too, against mine honour aught,
Turn me away, and let the foul'st contempt
Shut ~~door~~ upon me."

It is pleasant to see such a writer and true Shakespearean as Charles Knight on the right side in this matter. He says:—

"There is no secret as to this union; there is no affectation in concealing their attachment. He speaks of her as his wife; she of him as her husband. He is tall and finely formed, with a face radiant with intellect, and capable of expressing the most cheerful and most tender emotions. She is in the full beauty of womanhood, glowing with health and conscious happiness. Some of the gossips whisper that she is too old for him, but his frank and manly bearing, and her beauty and buoyant spirits, would not suggest this if some tattle about age were not connected with the whisper. The influence which his marriage must have had upon his destinies was, no doubt, considerable, but it is too much to assume, as it has been assumed,

that it was an unhappy influence. All that we *really* know of Shakespeare's family life warrants the contrary supposition. We believe that the marriage of Shakespeare was one of affection; that there was no disparity in the worldly condition of himself and the object of his choice; that it was with the consent of friends; that there were no circumstances connected with it which indicate that it was either forced or clandestine, or urged on by an artful woman to cover her apprehended loss of character."

It is needless further to refer to the idle sayings of the would-be wise as to Shakespeare's presumed estrangement from Anne. Happily he has himself left the most triumphant testimonies of his strong and



OLD WOOD CARVINGS OF ARMS ON MANTEL
IN UPPER ROOM IN ABOVE COTTAGE.

changeless affection to her, and that it was in the depth of domestic existence that he found his real happiness. To him everything was Anne Hathaway, but especially all wisdom, goodness, beauty, and delight took from her their existence, and gave to her their qualities. She was, in brief, the sun round which the rest of creation must needs take its course. If we doubt this, let us rest on the beautiful sonnet thus speaking:—

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments. *Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds;
Or bends, with the remover to remove.*
*O, no! it is an ever-fixed mark,
That looks on tempests, and is never shaken;*



It is the star of every wandering bark,
Whose worth's unknown, although his height
be taken.
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and
cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come;
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
If this be error, and upon me proved,
I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

Never have any lines been penned, more deeply and eternally expressive of the sentiment of affection springing from the soul than these. Whoever has slandered Shakespeare must have done so in ignorance of their existence. As Howitt properly puts it: He, like other men, had fallen into errors the which he would gladly have avoided; but where was the man who, after having won the fame that he had, and passed through the Circean enchantments of metropolitan beauty and splendour and wit as he had, ever gave so marvellous a proof

that his heart of hearts was not in them, but that his only hope and idea of true happiness was in his native fields, and in the home of his wedded affection? What accuser could venture to stand up against such a man, after reading the very next Sonnet, the continuation, in fact, of the former?

Accuse me thus; that I have scanted all,
Wherein I should your great deserts repay;
Forgot upon your dearest love to call,
Whereto all bonds do tie me, day by day;
That I have frequent been with unknown minds,
And given to them your own dear purchased right;
That I have hoisted sail to all the winds
Which should transport me farthest from your
sight:
Book both my wilfulness and errors down:
And on just proof, surmise accumulate,
Bring me within the level of your frown,
But shoot not at me in your waken'd hate:
Since my appeal says, I did strive to prove
The constancy and virtue of your love.

That his long absence (for there is nothing to show that his wife ever left Stratford to reside with him in London) had, say the seekers after evil, occasioned some misunderstanding and estrangement between them, would, they say, appear from several of his Sonnets, which are the only records left of his life and internal feelings; but the sorrow and repentance he expresses, are more than enough to unbend the brow of the sternest judge, much more of a tender, loving wife.

O, never say, that I was false of heart,
Though absence seem'd my flame to qualify.
As easy might I from myself depart,
As from my soul, which in thy breast doth lie.
That is my home of love: if I have ranged,
Like him that travels, I return again;
Just to the time, not with the time exchanged;
So that myself bring water for my stain.
Never believe, though in my nature reign'd
All frailties that besiege all kinds of blood,
That it could so preposterously be stain'd,
To leave for nothing all thy sum of good;
For nothing this wide universe I call
Save thou, my rose; in it thou art my all.

Alas! 'tis true, I have gone here and there,
And made myself a motley to the view;
Gored mine own thoughts, sold cheap what is
most dear,
Made old offences of affections new.
Most true it is, that I have look'd on truth
Askance and strangely; but, by all above,
These blenches gave my heart another youth,
And worse essays proved thee my best of love.
Now is all done, save what shall have no end:
Mine appetite I never more will grind
On newer proof, to try an older friend,
A god in love, to whom I am confined.
Then give me welcome, next my heaven the best,
Even to thy pure and most, most loving breast.

O, for my sake do you with fortune chide,
 The guilty goddess of my harmful deeds,
 That did not better for my life provide
 Than public means, which public manners
 breeds.
 Thence comes it that my name receives a brand,
 And almost thence my nature is subdued
 To what it works in, like the dyer's hand:
 Pity me then, and wish I were renew'd;
 Whilst, like a willing patient, I will drink
 Potions of eyell, 'gainst my strong infection,
 No bitterness that I will bitter think,
 Nor double penance, to correct correction;
 Pity me, then, dear friend, and I assure ye,
 Even that your pity is enough to cure me.

Very quickly after young William and Anne's betrothal, union, and taking up their joint residence with Anne's mother in the

obtain this special license from the ecclesiastical authorities there. It was closely on the end of November, 1582, that this journey was prosecuted.

The month is not the most inviting for a journey on horseback of more than thirty miles, and yet William Shakespeare, with two youthful friends, must ride to Worcester. The families of Shakespeare and Hathaway are naturally desirous that the sanction of the church should be given within the customary period to the alliance which their children have formed. They are reverential observers of old customs; and their recollections of the practice of all who went before them show that the marriage commenced by



Shottery home, conscience would be stirred to defer no longer a celebration of their marriage according to the rites of the English church, of which they were both sincere members. The prior betrothal ceremony seems, in their opinion, to have rendered necessary what we in our day term a "special license"; at any rate, such was substituted in their case for the form of public banns, which involved a month's further waiting. Accordingly, Anne's brother Richard and two friends, Fulk Sandells and John Rychardson, accompanied by the betrothed young William, set out for the city of Worcester in order to

the trothplight ought not to be postponed too long. Convenience ought to yield to propriety, and Christmas must see the young housekeepers well settled. A license must be procured from the Bishop's Court at Worcester. Fulk Sandells and John Rychardson, the companions of young Shakespeare, substantial yeomen, are cheerfully his bondsmen. Though he is a minor, and cannot join in the bond, they know that he will faithfully perform what he undertakes, and that their bond money is in no peril. They all well know the condition of such a bond. There is no pre-contract; no affinity between the

betrotthed; William has the consent of Anne's friends. They desire to be married with *once* asking of the banns; not an uncommon case, or the court would not grant such a license. They desire not to avoid the publicity of banns; but they seek a license for one publication, for their happiness has made them forget the lapse of time: the betrothment was binding indeed for ever upon true hearts, but the marriage will bless the contract and make it irrevocable in its sanctity. And thus the three friends, after tender adieus, and many lingerings upon the threshold of the cottage at Shottery, mount their horses, and take the way to Worcester.

Fulk Sandells and John Rychardson (as the marks to the marriage-bond testify) were not lettered persons. But, nevertheless, they might have been very welcome companions to William Shakespeare. The non-ability to write, even if it were so, did not necessarily imply that their minds had not received a certain amount of cultivation. To *him*, who drew his wondrous knowledge out of every source—books, conversation, observation of character—no society could be uninteresting. His genial nature would find objects of sympathy in the commonest mind. That he was a favourite among his own class it is impossible to doubt. His mental superiority was too great to be displayed in any assumption; his kindness of nature would knit him to every heart that was capable of affection—and what heart is not? Unintelligible would he be, no doubt, to many; but, as far as it is possible to conceive of his character, he would be wholly remote from that waywardness which has been considered the attribute of genius—neither moping, nor shy, nor petulant, nor proud; affecting no misanthropy, no indifference to the joys and sorrows of those around him; and certainly despising the fashion through which

"Young gentlemen would be as sad as night,
Only for wantonness."

—*King John*, act iv., scene 1.

Assuredly the intellect of Shakespeare was the most *healthful* ever bestowed upon man; and that was one cause of its unapproachable greatness. The soundest judgment was in combination with the highest fancy. With such friends, then, as Fulk Sandells and John Rychardson, would this young man be as free and as glad some as if they were as equal in their minds as in their worldly circumstances. He must of necessity have been the readiest in all discourse in his own

circle—the unconscious instructor of his companions; one that even age would listen to with reverence. To the young he would have been as a spirit of gladness lighted upon the earth, to make everything more bright and beautiful amidst which he walked.

Haliwell Phillips says the bond sufficiently proves that the marriage must have taken place with the consent of the Hathaways, and the bride's father was most likely present, when Sandells and Richardson executed the bond, for one of the seals has the initials R.H. upon it:—



There can be little doubt that the connection met with the approval of Shakespeare's parents, for there was no disparity of means or station to occasion their dissent. Nothing can be more erroneous than the conclusions generally drawn from the marriage bond. Anne Hathaway is there described as of Stratford, but so are the two bondsmen, who, as the register shows, were respectable neighbours of the Hathaways of Shottery. It has been said that Sandells and Rychardson were rude, unlettered husbandmen, unfitted to attend a poet's bridal. They could not, it is averred, write their own names, but neither, according to these same authorities, could many of the principal inhabitants of Stratford. Rychardson was a substantial farmer, as appears from the inventory of his goods made in 1594, his friend Sandells being engaged in its compilation. The epithet husbandman did not denote inferior condition. When Robert Myddylton, "pryste and chaunter in the College of Stratford," made his will in 1538, still preserved at Worcester, he named for his executors "William Wyllshay, pryste and vicare of the College of Warwicke, and Thomas Cole, husbandman, in Shottery." The husbandman of Shottery was, then, not necessarily a "heavy ploughman." If one husbandman could with propriety be a priest's executor, surely another might sign a bond without the circumstance creating mysterious argument.

The seal used when the bond was executed (and this fact is of very important significance) has upon it the initials R. H., and, therefore, evidently the seal of Richard Hathaway, father of the bride, had been used on the occasion, not only by his consent, but as giving additional



import to the document. In those days sealing was an act of solemnity, and the possession of a family seal placed the possessor in the rank of what was known as the "better class." The family had existed in Shottery long anterior to the middle of the 16th century, and clearly had been intimate for some years with the Shakespeare family, and their several heads had, it is proved, business with each other, John Shakespeare having been security for Richard Hathaway in 1566, and in the following year both are assessed "in bonis" at £4 apiece.

The previous ceremony by the Roman Catholic priest in the Shottery Chantry had entirely satisfied the bride and her family, and there is nothing in proof of the poet's father or mother regarding it differently, seeing that a subsequent public ceremony of Protestant rites had from the first been designed and arranged for.

The following is a copy of the Marriage License document in the Consistorial Court of Worcester, which was first published by Mr. Wheler in 1836, having been previously discovered by Haliwell Phillips. It consists of a bond to the officers of the Ecclesiastical Court, in which Fulk Sandells, of the county Warwick, farmer, and John Rychardson, of the same place, farmer, are bound in the

sum of forty pounds, etc. It is dated the 28th day of November in the 25th year of Elizabeth (1582):—

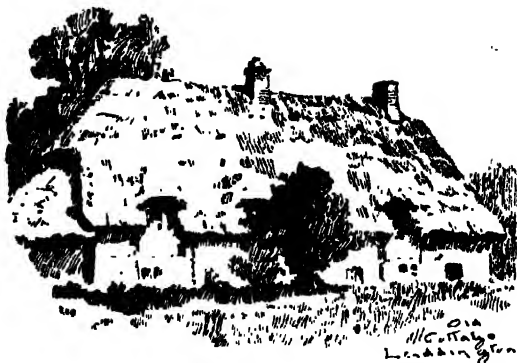
"Novint univsi p pntes nos Fulcone Sandells de Stratford in Comit Warwic agricolam et Johem Rychardson ibm agricola teneri et firmiter obligari Rico Cosin gnoso et Robto Warmstry notario puo in quadraginta libris bone et legalis monete Angliæ solvend eisdem Rico et Robto fiered execut vel assignat suis ad quam quidem soluconem bene et fidelr faciend obligam nos et utruq nrm p se pro toto et in solid hæred executor et administrator nros firmiter p pntes sigillis nris sigillat. Dat 28 die Nove Anno Regni Dne nre Eliz Dei gratia Angliæ Franc et Hibniæ Regine Fidei Defensor &c.25^o.

"The condicon of this obligacon ys suche, that if hereafter there shall not appere any lawfull lett or impediment by reason of any p contract or affinitic, or by any other lawful meanes whatsoev, but that Willm Shagspere on thone pte, and Anne Hathwey, of Stratford, in the Dioces of Worcester, maiden, may lawfully solemnize mriony, and in the same afterwards remaine and continew like man and wife, according unto the laws in that case provided; and morecov, if there be not at this psent time any action, quarrel, suit, or demand, moved or depending before any judge ecclesiastical or temporall for and concerning any such lawfull lett or impediment. And morecov, if the said Willm Shagspere do not pceed to solemnizacon of mariadg with the said Ann Hathwey without the consent of hir frinds. And also if the said Willm do upon his own pper cost and expences defend and save harmles the Right Revend Father in God Lord John Bushop of Worcester and his offycers, for licensing them, the said Willm and Anne, to be married together wth once asking of the bannes of mriony betwene them and for all other causes wch may ensue by reason or occasion thereof, that then the said obligacon to be voyd and of none effect, or else to stand and abide in fulle force and vertue."

The object of the marriage bond was to obtain such a dispensation from the Bishop of Worcester as would authorize a clergyman to unite the bride and bridegroom in any parish church within the Diocese after only a single publication of the banns, and looking at the circumstances of their marriage union having been one of betrothal only, although such was looked upon as in all respects binding, yet Shakespeare, as a religiously conscientious man, knowing his wife's condition

and probable maternity within the next seven months, felt it his duty and pleasure that the religious and formal ceremony, with its accompaniments of registry and public notification, should be gone through without further delay according to the rites of Mother Church, of which they were both baptized members.

Anne Hathaway, as appears from her monumental inscription in Stratford Church, was born in the year 1556, and was therefore eight years older than her husband. With this fact in view, and relying on very uncertain allusions in his plays and sonnets, it has been unjustly conjectured that Shakespeare's marriage was not productive of domestic happiness. For this opinion not a fragment of direct evidence has been produced; and on such grounds it may as reasonably be said that he was in his own person the actual representative of all the passions he describes in the persons of his characters. But "his wife and daughters did earnestly desire to be lay'd in the same grave with him," as the clerk informed Dowdall in the year 1693. They who desire greater sympathy find it furnished by the pleasing memorial of filial affection in the chancel of Stratford Church; a monument raised by her daughter, which tells us how



Captain Saunder's "Warwickshire Collections," vol. iv., Shakespeare's Birth-place Library, tells us that

LUDDINGTON

in the Saxon era belonged to the Bishopric of Worcester, and was wrested from that church by the Saxons in the reign of King Canute. According to the "Doomsday Survey," it was, in the time of King Edward the Confessor, possessed by four Theins, and reputed for two manors; William I. gave it to the Earl of Mellent, being then esteemed at xij hides, which were held of him by four knights, and valued at vijli. It is there written Luditone, probably deriving such appellation from the name of some ancient possessor. From this Earl it came to his brother Henry de Newburgh, Earl of Warwick, and was granted by him or his son Earl Roger to the ancestor of Robert de Valle in the time of Henry I., as appears from the certificate made by William, Earl of Warwick, in 12 Henry II., at which time Robert de Valle held it of the same Earl by the service of half a knight's fee, in whose line it continued till the issue-male failing, it came by a daughter to Burdett, as will hereafter appear of the family de Valle; the third Robert was a Justice of Assize in the county in 17 and 20 Henry III., and his son Robert a knight in 21 Edward I., also in 3 Edward II., in commission for assessing and collecting a fifteenth and tenth, and afterwards a coroner for the county, but not being able to attend to the latter office, in consequence of his great employment for several eminent persons, the Sheriff in 14 Edward II. was required to cause another coroner to be elected. Robert was succeeded by his son, called Robert de Vaal, junior, who went in the Welsh expedition of 15 Edward II., probably that which was occasioned by the difference between John de Mowbray, Roger Mortimer,



Formerly existing remains of Old Luddington Church.

revered was Anne Shakespeare's memory, and plainly teaches us to infer she possessed "as much virtue as could die." Such a being must have lived happily with the "gentle Shakespeare,"

Ubera tu, mater, tu lac vitamque dedisti
Væ mihi ! pro tanto munere saxa dabo.

and Hugh le Despenser the younger, relative to the land of Gowher in Wales. This Robert was in 14 Edward II. constituted one of the commissioners for the conservation of the peace in this county, and for taking care that the articles contained in the statute of Winchester should be observed; and in 20 of the same reign, and 1 Edward III., one of the Justices for the gaol-delivery at Warwick; as also a commissioner for assessing and collecting a twentieth in this county, and had the rank of knight in 7 Edward III. heir. To him succeeded John, his son, and on whom, and his heirs, in 8 Edward III., his father had settled this manor, and, in default of issue, to go to his sisters, Elianor and Katharine; he was a commissioner likewise for levying a twentieth and tenth in this county, in 27 and 28 Edward III. He was murdered in 34 of the same reign, by William Abbot of Evesham, who obtained a pardon in 39. He left the inheritance to his cousins, John Burdett, and John Norrys, but the lordship at length devolved upon Burdett; yet it appears that other persons



had a grant of free-warren for all his demesne lands here, and in 10 Henry VI. it was found that Sir Thomas Burdett of Arrow, in this county, knight, together with John Welsh of Sheldessey in Worcestershire, gentleman, held 11 messuages and 11 yard land here by the service of a fourth part of a knight's fee: however, the whole right of the manor was at length fixed in the before-mentioned Sir Thomas Burdett, as appears by his feoffment thereof, in 21 Henry VI., and from him descended to his great-grandchild, Richard Burdett. To Richard succeeded Anne, his daughter and heiress, married to Edward Conway, Esq., and whereby the inheritance thereof descended to their posterity, and is in consequence, at present, the property of the Marquis of Hertford. This manor consists of about one thousand acres, containing xix houses and cxi inhabitants. The village, or hamlet, is situated on the left bank of the River Avon, on an eminence, and forms a semi-circle round a small green, or common, looking towards the river, and commanding a fine view of Milcote House on the opposite bank, and the extensive and fertile vale bounded by the Ilmington and Cotswold Hills.

Luddington was formerly a chapelry to Stratford; but the chapel having gone to decay, it was finally demolished about 17, and no traces now remain, the site being dug up and now forming a garden to one of the village houses. The bell, on which was inscribed, "GOD SAVE KING JAMES, 1609," remained for some time after the demolition of the chapel.



had estate here for a time, as in 2 Henry IV., John Wyard was certified to hold the fourth part of a knight's fee here from the Earl of Warwick, in right of his wife; and in 2 of the same monarch, Robert Castell



Chapel
Grammar
School
from the back
of the
almshouse

From a sketch by Edgar Flower, of Stratford.

THE CHAPEL OF THE GUILD AND GRAMMAR SCHOOL.

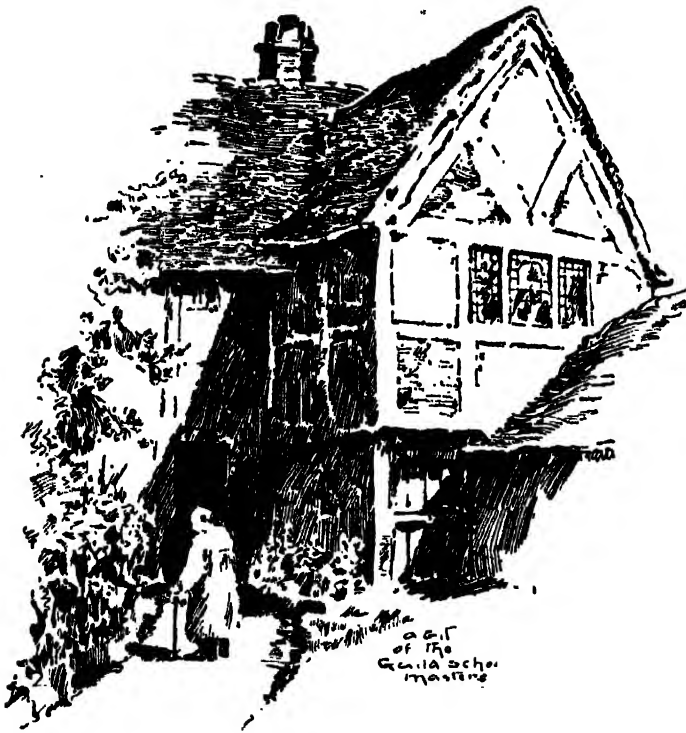


HAKESPEARE yields undying fame to Jollyffe's School, known as the Guild, glorying in the honour of his education. A Royal Charter was granted by King Edward VI. to Stratford for the incorporation of the inhabitants. It re-

cites:—"That the borough of Stratford-upon-Avon was an ancient borough, in which a certain Guild was theretofore founded, and endowed with divers lands, tenements, and possessions, out of the rent, revenues, and profits whereof a certain free Grammar School for the education of boys there was made and supported." The charter further recites the other public objects to which the property of the Guild had been applied; that it was dissolved, and that its possessions had come into the hands of the king. The charter of incorporation then grants to the bailiff and

burgesses certain properties which were parcel of the possessions of the Guild, for the general charges of the borough, for the maintenance of an ancient almshouse, "and that the free Grammar School for the instruction and education of boys and youths there, should be thereafter kept up and maintained as therefor it used to be." It may be doubted whether Stratford was benefited by the dissolution of its Guild. This Grammar School was an ancient establishment. It was not a creation of the charter of Edward VI., although it is popularly called one of the grammar schools of that king and singularly enough was the very last school established by him. The people of Stratford had possessed the advantage of a school for instruction in Greek and Latin (which is the distinct object of a grammar school), from the time of Edward IV., when Thomas Jollyffe, in 1482, "granted to the Guild of the Holy Cross of Stratford-upon-Avon all his lands and tenements in Stratford and Dodwell, in the county of Warwick, upon condition that the master, aldermen, and proctors of the said Guild should find a priest, fit and able in knowledge, to teach grammar freely to all

scholars coming to the school in the said town to him, taking nothing of the scholars for their teaching." The townsfolk are loyal to their true founder, Thomas Jollyffe, and ever have and ever will speak of it as Jollyffe's school. Dugdale describes the origin of guilds, speaking of this at Stratford:—"Such meetings were at first used by a mutual agreement of friends and neighbours, and particular licences granted to them for conferring lands or rents to defray their public charges in respect that, by the statute of mortmain, such gifts would otherwise have been forfeited."



In the surveys of Henry VIII., previous to the dissolution of religious houses, there were four salaried priests belonging to the Guild of Stratford, with a clerk, who was also a schoolmaster, at a salary of ten pounds per annum. They were a hospitable body, these guild-folk, for there was an annual feast, to which all the fraternity resorted with their tenants and farmers; and an inventory of their goods in the 15th of Edward IV. shows that they were rich in plate for the service of the table, as well as of the chapel. The priests of the Guild having been driven from their home and

their means of maintenance, the chapel for a time ceased to be a place of worship. It was partly rebuilt by the great benefactor of Stratford, Sir Hugh Clopton; and after the dissolution of the Guild, and the establishment of the Grammar School by the charter of Edward VI., the school was in all probability kept within it. There is an entry in the Corporation books, of February 18, 1594-5—"At this hall it was agreed by the bailiff and the greater number of the company now present that there shall be no school kept in the chapel from this time following." In associating, therefore, the

schoolboy days of William Shakespeare with the free Grammar School of Stratford, we may be sure that he there commenced his education and pursued it to its academical end.

This was unquestionably the building in which Shakespeare received his education, and Roche and Hunt were then its Head Masters. In his early infancy, a fearful pestilence or fever which had ravaged all Europe, and especially London, in the previous year, visited Stratford, carrying off, in less than half a year, above two hundred persons out of a population of less than two thousand. Poetical enthusiasts will find no difficulty in believing that, like Horace, Shakespeare reposed secure and fearless in the midst of contagion and death, protected by the muses to whom his future life was to be devoted.

Sacra

Lauroque, collatâque myrto
Non sine dis animosus infans.

Ah! indeed, fearful was that pestilence the plague, which, but two months after the baptism of Shakespeare, ravaged the quiet old town of Stratford-upon-Avon; and, instead of a yearly average of some forty deaths, two hundred and thirty-eight souls, in the space of six months, were swept into eternity. The infant who was afterwards so to bless the world, was happily spared, nor does any of his family appear to have

perished. We can well imagine the anxiety of mind which Master John Shakespeare would experience for the safety of his family; and how Mary would tremblingly kiss her sleeping babe, as the deep toll of the passing bell daily smote upon her ear, announcing to all that—

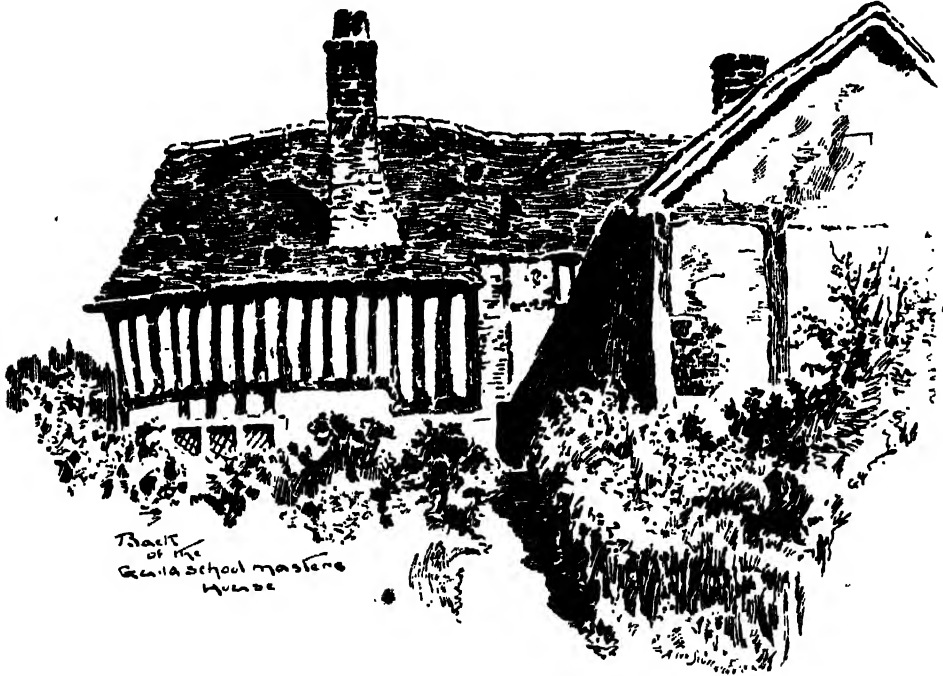
Another soul from earth has fled,
Another body with the dead
Beneath the sod was numbered.

Possibly dewdrops never stood more conspicuous on the lupin, or raindrops

one's blood; how terrible, then, must it have been to those who witnessed the dreadful mortality! The wails of the infant prodigy:—

"You know the first time that we smell the air
We wawl and cry."
—*King Lear.*

might be almost unheard and unmarked amidst the cries of dying babes and Rachels weeping for their children. Although he has nowhere in his writings elaborately or at length painted the pest; yet he has enclosed the whole poetry, if not the whole pathos



Sketch
of the
Gentry School Master's
House

thicker on the hawthorn, than did the tears in that mother's eyes. But dear as their infant son doubtless was to them, as he nestled in their arms, they dreamt not what more than monarch they were rearing for mankind. One may also imagine the boy Shakespeare, when a few more years were past, listening devoutly as his mother related the particulars of that dreadful plague, as they sat around the fire on winter nights, when the storm-king ruled supreme without, and the blazing logs crackled merrily on the capacious hearth; whilst ever and anon the stool of the future poet of mankind would advance an inch or two nearer to the cheerful blaze. Even to read the narrative of a plague is enough to curdle

and horror of the plague, in the lines of Tymson:—

"Bear a planetary plague when Jove
Will o'er some high-voiced city hang his poison
In the sick air."

Nothing in all the descriptions of pestilence in the pages of Thucydides, Boccaccio, Defoe, or other writers can be compared in intensity of power with these three lines, blending as they do the cause and the effect, the punishment and the crimes, together in a gloomy harmony, and exhibiting the whole collected darkness and death lowering over the doomed city, as one poisoned cup, drugged by the hand of God Himself, and to be drunk "without mixture."

Shakespeare, at seven years of age or there-



Back of
Grammar
School
and
Holy Guild.

abouts, entered Jollyffe's free Grammar School, and according to general belief during the mastership of Walter Roche, succeeded by Simon Hunt, both worthy curates and model schoolmasters, who had the happy faculty of cowering their pupils with a simple olive branch more effectually than others could do with a whole forest of birch. A reminiscence of this period is doubtless the scene in the "Merry Wives of Windsor," where Sir Hugh questions William Page "in his accidence," with a running commentary by Mrs. Page. Here he acquired the "small Latin and less Greek," made so much of by Ben Jonson.

Here we have clearly the poet's mother and the School Dominie discussing the matter of the boy's admission into the Guild School. Substitute Stratford for Windsor, and the scene conforms perfectly.

Mrs. Page. I'll be with her by-and-bye; I'll but bring my young man here to school. Look, where his master comes; 'tis a playing day, I see.

Enter Sir HUGH EVANS.

How now, Sir Hugh? no school to-day?

Eva. No; Master Slender is let the boys leave to play.

Quick. Blessing of his heart!

Mrs. Page. Sir Hugh, my husband says, my son profits nothing in the world at his book. I pray you, ask him some questions in his accidence.

Eva. Come hither, William; hold up your head; come.

Mrs. Page. Come on, sirrah; hold up your head; answer your master. Be not afraid.

Eva. William, how many numbers is in nouns?

Will. Two.

Quick. Truly, I thought there had been one number more; because they say, od's nouns?

Eva. Peace your tattlings. What is *fair*, William?

Will. *Pulcher*.

Quick. Poulcats! there are fairer things than poulcats, sure.

Eva. You are a very simplicity, 'oman. I pray you, peace. What is *lapis*, William?

Will. A stone.

Eva. And what is a stone, William?

Will. A pebble.

Eva. No, it is *lapis*; I pray you, remember in your prain.

Will. *Lapis*.

Eva. That is good, William. What is he, William, that does lend articles?

Will. Articles are borrowed of the pronoun; and be thus declined, *Singulariter, nominativo, hic, hac, hoc*.

Eva. *Nominativo, hic, hag, hog*;—pray you, mark: *genitivo, hujus*: Well, what is your *accusative case*?

Will. *Accusativo, hunc*.

Eva. I pray you, have your remembrance, child; *accusativo, hing, hang, hog*.

Quick. Hang hog is Latin for bacon, I warrant you.

Eva. Leave your prabbles, 'oman. What is the *locative case*, William?

Will. *O—vocativo, O*.

Eva. Remember, William, *locative* is *caret*.

Quick. And that is a good root.

Eva. 'Oman, forbear.

Mrs. Page. Peace.

Eva. Show me now, William, some declensions of your pronouns.

Will. Forsooth, I have forgot.

Eva. It is *qui, quæ, quod*; if you forget your *quis*, your *quæ*s, and your *quod*s, you must be preaches. Go your ways, and play; go.

Mrs. Page. He is a better scholar than I thought he was.

Eva. He is a good sprag memory. Farewell, Mrs. Page.

Mrs. Page. Adieu, good Sir Hugh. [Exit Sir Hugh.] Get you home, boy.—Come, we stay too long. [Exeunt.]

—The Merry Wives of Windsor, iv., 1.

Some would have us believe that he was prematurely withdrawn from the school, owing to the sudden impoverishment of his father, and became a schoolmaster in the country. A most improbable conclusion,

seeing his hearty disgust for such occupation, or he would never have portrayed Holofernes and Pinch as representative pedagogues. Perhaps this aversion arose from a consciousness that he could do better with his brains than to dilute them into intellectual pulp and dispense them with bib and pap spoon for the nurture of infant minds. There is every reason to believe that his childhood passed away under the kindly influences of home instruction, rather than as—

"The whining schoolboy with his satchel and shining morning face,
Creeping like snail unwillingly to school."

All his dramas show that his boyhood fed upon ancient and mediæval tales of romance,

boys climbing into a tree after the golden fruits of knowledge, an allegorical picture which, by reason of a too literal interpretation, has always contributed less to the acquisition of learning than to the spoliation of neighbouring orchards. Life, too, in Shakespeare's youth was full of poetry. It was the period when the twilight of the Middle Age was just beginning to brighten with the dawning tints of modern civilization. Accustomed as we are to our more prosaic holidays, we can scarcely enter into the delights of Ember eve and holy ale and harvest home, May Day, Merry Shrovetide, "Whitsun pastorals," and even sheep-shearing, so fully pictured in "Winter's Tale." The minuteness of detail, mingled with the most



the chronicles that told of mail-clad knights and of the cunning archers and bold billmen who fought at Poitiers and Tewkesbury; the merry songs and poetic readings that came side by side with many a "devoute and gostely treatise" from the press of the genial Caxton. Tradition reports that he learned Latin from Lilly's grammar, and a quotation which he makes, not as it is in Terence but as it is in Lilly, would seem to confirm the supposition. If so, we can easily believe that he was attracted not so much by the paradigms as by the frontispiece representing

exquisite poetry in the descriptions of these festivals, reveals the strong hold which they took on the heart and imagination of the boy poet. No hint was lost upon him. The ancient tales and romances which he read; the local traditions and superstitions which he heard; the pageants and festivities which he saw—everything that came under his quick and penetrating observation nourished in him the poetic faculty, like seeds that would have perished on a hard and barren soil, but which, in his fertile intellect, and under the warming rays of his genius, germinated and

developed into the rarest flowers and the most luscious fruits.

The Chapel of the Holy Guild, situate close upon New Place, Shakespeare's home, and seen from almost every window of the house and from every part of the garden, abutting forward as it does on the corner of the street, is, in great part, a perfect specimen of the plainer ecclesiastical architecture of the reign of Henry VII., a building of just proportions and some ornament, but not running into elaborate decoration, and dates back to the thirteenth century, and was used as a schoolroom during Shakespeare's boyhood, and until 1595. It was originally a Roman Catholic institution, founded in 1269 under the patronage of the Bishop of Worcester, and committed to the pious custody of the Guild of Stratford. A hospital was connected with it in those days, and Robert de Stratford was its first master. New privileges and confirmation were granted to the Guild by Henry VI., in 1423 and 1429. The Grammar School, established on an endowment of lands and tenements by good Thomas Jollyffe, was set up in association with it in 1482. Towards the end of the reign of Henry VII., the whole of the chapel was torn down and rebuilt under the munificent direction of Sir Hugh Clopton, Lord Mayor of London, and Stratford's chief citizen and benefactor. Under Henry VIII., when came the stormy times of the Reformation, the priests were driven out, the Guild was deprived, and the chapel was despoiled.

The interior now presents nothing very remarkable, though upon a general repair of the chapel in 1804, beneath the whitewash of successive generations laid on them in Puritan times, either to spoil or to hide from the spoiler, was discovered a series of most remarkable paintings; some in that portion of the building erected by Sir Hugh Clopton, and others in the far more ancient chancel. From the defacement of some of the paintings, they had evidently been partially destroyed by violence, and all attempted to be obliterated in the progress of the

Reformation. But that outbreak of zeal did not belong to the first periods of religious change, and it is most probable that these paintings were existing in the early years of Elizabeth's reign. Those rude paintings must have produced a powerful effect upon the imagination of Shakespeare. Some of them in the ancient chancel constituted a pictorial romance—the history of the Holy Cross, from its origin as a tree at the creation of the world to its rescue from the Pagan Cosdroy, king of Persia, by the Christian king, Heraclius, and its final exaltation at Jerusalem—the anniversary of which event was celebrated at Stratford at its annual fair held on the 14th of September. There were other pictures of saints and martyrdoms;







and one especially, of the murder of Thomas à Becket, which exhibits great force, without that grotesqueness which generally belongs to the others. There were fearful pictures, too, of the Last Judgment and the Seven Deadly Sins, which visibly portrayed the punishments of the evil, the rewards of the just. This chapel and its school bring us face to face with Shakespeare, with which, as a pupil in the school in about the year 1571, he must have been familiar, for it was used as the school as late as the year 1595. Surrounded as he was with the memorials of the old religion—with great changes on every side, but still very recent changes, how impossible was it that Shakespeare should have been other than thoroughly imbued with a knowledge of all that pertained to the faith of his ancestors! Carlyle says that Catholicism gave us Shakespeare. Charles Knight, however, steps in here and adds:—“Not so, entirely; Shakespeare belonged to the transition period, or he could not have been quite what he was. His intellect was not the dwarfish and precocious growth of the hot-bed of change, and still less of convulsion. His whole soul was permeated with the ancient vitalities—the things which the changes of institutions could not touch; but it could burgeon under the new influences, and blend the past and the present, as the ‘giant oak’ of five hundred winters is covered with the foliage of one spring.”

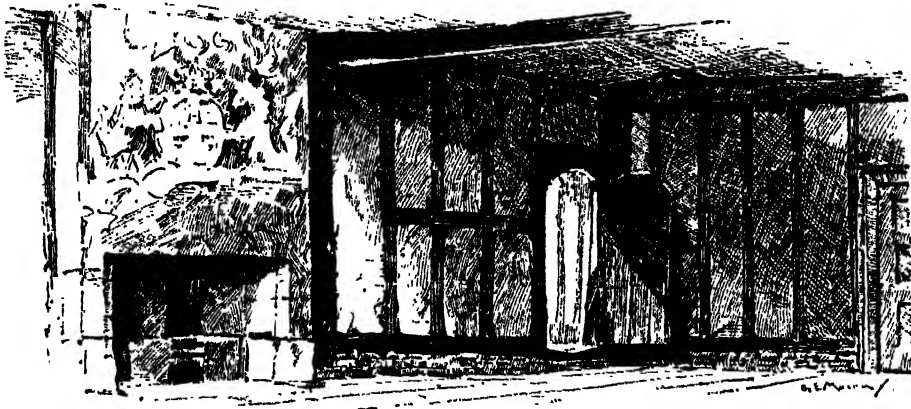
The building which formed the Stratford Grammar School in Shakespeare's time still exists, and with comparatively slight alterations, and has until recent years been employed for the same purposes. How deep is the interest it possesses to every true Shakespearean! It is a long low structure, with a projecting upper story which contains the school-rooms, divided by a partition into the Latin and the Mathematical schools. These present very much the appearance which they must have exhibited in the sixteenth century. The lath and plaster by which the old timbers of the roof were concealed have been removed. In a chamber to the rear of the school on the same floor, and belonging to the same architectural era, the Corporation of Stratford held its meetings. Descending to the ground-floor we enter beneath the school-room the old Guildhall, where, in Shakespeare's time, plays used to be acted. The apartment behind has for some years been used as an armoury for the Rifle Volunteers. Here, amid guns and bayonets ranged in stands around the walls, in the centre of the room until very recently was a long table, on the



top of which extended an antique "shovel-board," said, as matter of course, to have been the identical board on which Shakespeare and his companions used to play at that primitive game in the Falcon Tavern, an ancient hostelry of the Elizabethan era, though now with modernized front, still existing on the opposite side of the street. Looking back some twenty years, the writer spent "a good time," a joyous fortnight, under this Falcon's wing, to be close to the school and the Guild and Holy Trinity. No other than Anne Page was the hostess. She verified our and Will's idea, and made the Falcon a true home.

It is not possible to imagine Shakespeare

a deep religious tone underlaid all. Mothers made it a solemn obligation personally to teach the first infant lispsings of hymn and prayer, followed by the alphabet and rudimentary spelling, and would have shuddered at deputing these duties, for the which they held themselves solemnly and in the highest degree responsible before God. Mary Shakespeare, we may be assured, did not lack in becoming sense of her high calling towards her loved boy. Is it too much to indulge in the assumption that there may have been moments in which visions of the future mighty intellect whose infancy was confided to her may have been permitted to flit across her fancy? Despite much secret persecution



The Old Guildhall Room—on street floor of the Guild School. It was in this room the plays were performed in Shakespeare's time.

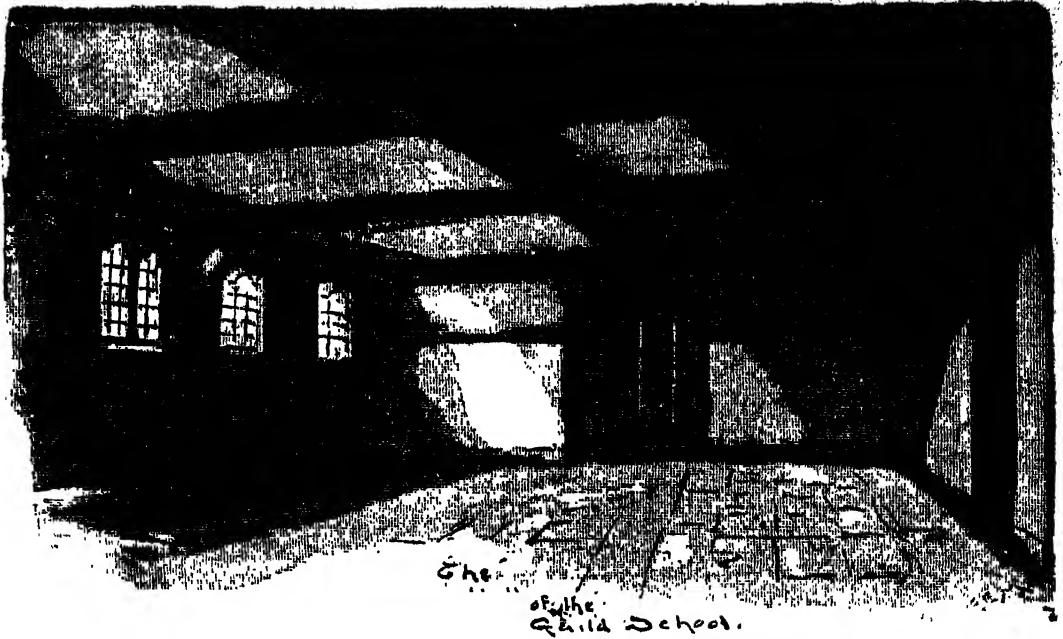
a petted child, chained to home, not breathing the free air upon his native hills, denied the boy's privilege to explore every nook of his own river. We would imagine him communing from the first with Nature as Gray has painted him :—

"The dauntless child
Stretch'd forth his little arms and smiled."

His mother being what in those days was expressively known as a "gentlewoman." She had earnestly devoted her youthful period of study to the acquisition of healthful mental attainments. Her class had not been imbued with railway-stalls literature and more than questionable exciting novels, such as now possess the heads of too many fair daughters of these later times. Feminine education, so far as it went, was thorough and real and well grounded. Most important,

from the Puritans, as an Arden she would do her duty and acquit herself in all probability under conviction that she was imparting knowledge to a capacity of marvellous reception, and therefore needing a more than ordinary religious mingling. Mary, we may be assured, did her part well, and when her boy at the tender age of seven years, was marched off to enter on the free Grammar School of Thomas Jollyffe and drink its more advanced education, there was no evidence of shortcoming on her part.

The only qualifications necessary for the admission of a boy into the free Grammar School of Stratford were, that he should be a resident in the town of seven years of age and able to read. The Grammar School was essentially connected with the Corporation of Stratford; and it is impossible to imagine that when the son of John Shakespeare



became qualified by age for admission to a school where the best education of the time was given literally for nothing, his father, in that year being chief Alderman, should not have sent him to the school. Who will doubt, then, that the boy was educated at this free Grammar School? The school was there, and thanks to Thomas Jollyffe, its founder, offered an education equal to any of the highest class of then public schools. Shakespeare's father, chief Alderman of Stratford, and then a man of worldly substance, though afterwards sustaining reverses, would desire that his children should grow up in the knowledge here to be acquired. To the ancient school-house accordingly, and the adjacent Chapel of the Guild, the pilgrim confidently traces for years the daily footsteps of the poet. The school was free, the master being paid out of the public revenues of the town. That he did so attend is as morally certain as the fact of the school house existence and of his father's position and standing in the town. These grammar schools in those days were invariably taught by clergymen, graduates of the universities. The town records show that the teachers of this particular school from 1569, when Shakespeare was five years old, to 1578, were Walter Roche and Simon Hunt, (both had been curates of the neighbouring village of Luddington,) and Thomas Jenkins, and that it was called the Grammar School, which in those days meant a

school in which Latin and Greek were taught. The worldly circumstances of Shakespeare's parents, together with their own education, would render them desirous that their son should receive the best education possible, and which was clearly obtainable at the town Grammar School. As there is nothing to show the date of his entry, so also there is no record of when he left it. Rowe says:—"The narrowness of his father's circumstances, and the want of his assistance at home, forced his father to withdraw him from thence, and unhappily prevented his further proficiency."

This is the very opposite of the fact. However great his desire to help his parents, there exists no sufficient evidence of their being in such straits as is represented. The remark attributed to Rowe that his "withdrawal from thence prevented his further proficiency" is sheer nonsense. Could any greater proficiency than was his, ever attach to the brain of mortal man? He had drunk his fill at the Jollyffe fountain, and, "sighing like a furnace" for Sweet Anne, resolved on self support.

His parents had been wrongfully under the Puritan ban of the Lord of Charlecote, and every opportunity of worrying them was resorted to by Justice Shallow and his Stratford myrmidons. John Shakespeare, however, was not easily cowed. His good wife Mary, though faithful to the new faith



Little room
in the
Guild
School

which had enabled her husband better to hold his position in Stratford, yet at times her heart may have been saddened with reflections on the causes leading to the families having turned their backs on the ancient religion.

The feud between the lord of Charlecote and John Shakespeare would be about at its culminating point during the poet's last year at the Guild School. It was prior to this he had taken up a temporary residence in Clifford, as enabling him better to resist the persecution of the Lucy Puritan party, then fiercely arrayed against him. There is good evidence that Lucy, although not a member of the Stratford Corporation, nevertheless held that body under his sway. A series of entries in the Corporation accounts, such as the following, prove that the gallant knight, Puritan as he was, took well to sack, and slaked his thirst with goodly draughts of the comforting liquid on occasions of visiting his aldermanic minions, on Catholic persecution intent; and we may be sure the Councillors of Stratford town had not to endure a "dry time" when Protestant business demanded their attendance at The Hall. The Lucy family, from its early days, as now, have ever been given to a noble hospitality.

1578. Item, to John Smith for a pottell of wine and a quarterne of sugar, for Sir Thomas Lucy. xvjd.

1584. Paid, for a quart of sacke, a pottell of claret wine, a quarterne of sugar, for Sir Thomas Lucy, Knight, the xijth of Januarie, 1583. ijs. jd.

1586. Paid, for wine and sugar when Sir Thomas Lucie sat in commission, for tipplers. xxd.

1595 Item, for sacke and claret wine, for Sir Thomas Lucie and my ladie and Mr. Sherife, at the Swanne. iijs.

Item, paid att the Swanne for a quart of sacke and a quarterne of sugar burned for Sir Thomas Lucie. xvjd.

See 1st *Henry IV.*, act ii., scene 4.

1597. Item, paid the 20th of January, a^o 1596, for wine and sugar bestowed on Sir Thomas Lucye and other gust. vjs. vjd.

Item, paid to Edward Ayngre for a quart of sake and a quarterne of sugher, bestowed on Sir Thomas Lucy and Mr. Burgon, at the Swann. xxjd.

In order to understand the ground of differences between this family and their Puritan enemies, their pleadings in the cause must be studied:—

The replacacion of John Shakespeare and Mary his wief, plent, to the answere of John Lamberte, defendant.

The said complaynauts, for replacacion to the answere of the said defendant, saie that theire bill of complaynt ys certayne and sufficient in the lawe to be answered; which said bill, and matters therein conteyned, these complainants will avow, veresie, and justifie to be true, and sufficient in the lawe to be answered unto, in such sort, manner and forme, as the same be sett forthe and declared in said bill; and further they saie that thanswere of the said defendaunt is untrue and insufficient in lawe to be replied unto, for many apparent causes in the same appearinge, thadvantage whereof these complainants praie may be to theym now and at all times saved, then and not ells; for further replacacion to the said answere, they saie that accordinge to the condicion of proviso mentioned in the said indenture of bargaine and sale of the premisses mencioned in the said bill of complaynt, he this complainent John Shaksperre did come to the dwellinge house of the same Edmunde Lamberte, in Barton upon the heathe, upon the feaste daie of St. Michael tharchangell, which was in the yeare of our Lorde God one thousand fyve hundred and eightie, and then and there tendered to paie for the redemption of the said premisses; which somme the said Edmunde did refuse to receyve, sayinge that he owed him other money, and that unles that he the said John would paie him altogether, as well the said fortie pounds as the other money, which he owed him over and above, he would not receive the said fortie pounds, and immediatlie after he the said Edmunde dyed, and by reason thereof, he the said defendant entered into the said premisses, and wrongfullie kepeth and detayneth the said premisses from him the said complainant: without that any other matter or thinge materiall or effectuall for these complainantes to replie unto, and not herein sufficientlie confessed and avyded, denied and traversed, ys true: all which matters and things thes complaynauts are redie to averr and prove, as thi: honorable court will awarde, and pray as before in theire said bill they have praied.

J. HOVELL.

Indorso Ter Michael, annis 40 et 41.

The Grammar School education would enable one of his vast power to undertake at an early age literary and legal work, thus

affording opportunity of aiding his father in the maintenance of his family, consisting, after the death of his daughter Anne in 1579, and the birth of his son Edmund in 1580, of his wife and five children. Aubrey, who crops up in every life of Shakespeare as the original fabricator of utterly unworthy and improbable fables, positively asserts that "in his younger years Shakespeare had been a schoolmaster in the country." The venture is the only likely one of his several stories regarding the early life of the Supreme Master of the mysteries of human nature. It is probable that Jenkins, the master of the school from 1577 to 1580, if not for a longer period, seeing his vast abilities, would eagerly avail of him in the capacity of "usher." The aiding his parents, if then a necessity, may have been a temporary employment at the Grammar School, and in addition to such school duty he may have worked in drawing up legal documents, and assisting to conduct business for one of the town attorneys. Proofs of legal knowledge abound in his plays, and as a loving youth he would rejoice in any labour giving relief to his father. Lord Chancellor Campbell and other eminent legal authorities are of accord in this matter.

After leaving school, our youthful poet, seeing the pressure upon his father to provide the sinews for legal warfare, would naturally seek employment such as would prove most remunerative. We must not gauge his intellect, which bordered on the infinite, neither can we measure his perceptions of the family troubles, or the courageous manner in which he, then a young boy, would enter into the fight. It may have been the help of a young Titan, who from earliest childhood had drunk deeply of parental wrongs. The probability is that his first outset in life was in the office of his father's attorney, with whom his first dominie, Walter Roche, had become articled. There must have been much engrossing work to be done, followed, we may feel certain, by employment of higher grade, and for which the youthful assistant would be well compensated; for who would turn out such wondrous legal work as

he? Roche, at expiry of his articles, would be associated as partner, and it is no mere assumption to assert that he and the youth William Shakespeare found themselves the executants of the legal business needed to secure restitution of his family rights. Not even his contemporary, Bacon, could have been more equal to conquer in such a strife!

Bold must the man be who would say that at his then early age he could not have acquired sufficient knowledge of law to fit him for these duties. Who shall dare to measure the power and capability of an intellect in comparison with which the world affords no parallel? It has come to the knowledge of the writer, through reliable Roman Catholic sources, that he had access at this period to an old and rather extensive library, for the times, at Billesley Hall, distant only a walk of about three miles from Stratford. The old mansion yet exists in precisely the state as when Shakespeare constantly visited it. It has descended to its present occupant, Arthur Cowdray, with at least strongest unbroken tradition regarding Shakespeare's usage of the library, and there is a large bedroom, which, from those days, has ever been known as Shakespeare's bedroom. We give drawings of the principal rooms.

The fact of this Billesley Hall and other libraries being at the power of his use and ransack, explains his marvellous familiarity with history, geography, languages, in fact with the whole round of possible human knowledge, for what is there of human ken in the time in which he lived, and it may be almost added, in the centuries that have since rolled by, that he did not know, and had



This room is traditioned as in precisely its condition in Shakespeare's time, when he is said to have slept frequently in it.

not seemingly mastered? However great the innate wisdom, such a mine of knowledge as existed in him is explainable in no other way. Surely it is more reasonable to infer that it was largely acquired through such source, than through any employment as a butcher's apprentice, slaying beasts and

bore no resemblance to the good parson who taught the Grammar School at Stratford, and that William Shakespeare's mother had not to complain like the mother of the schoolboy, William Page:—"Sir Hugh, my husband says my son profits nothing in the world at his book; I pray you, ask him some questions



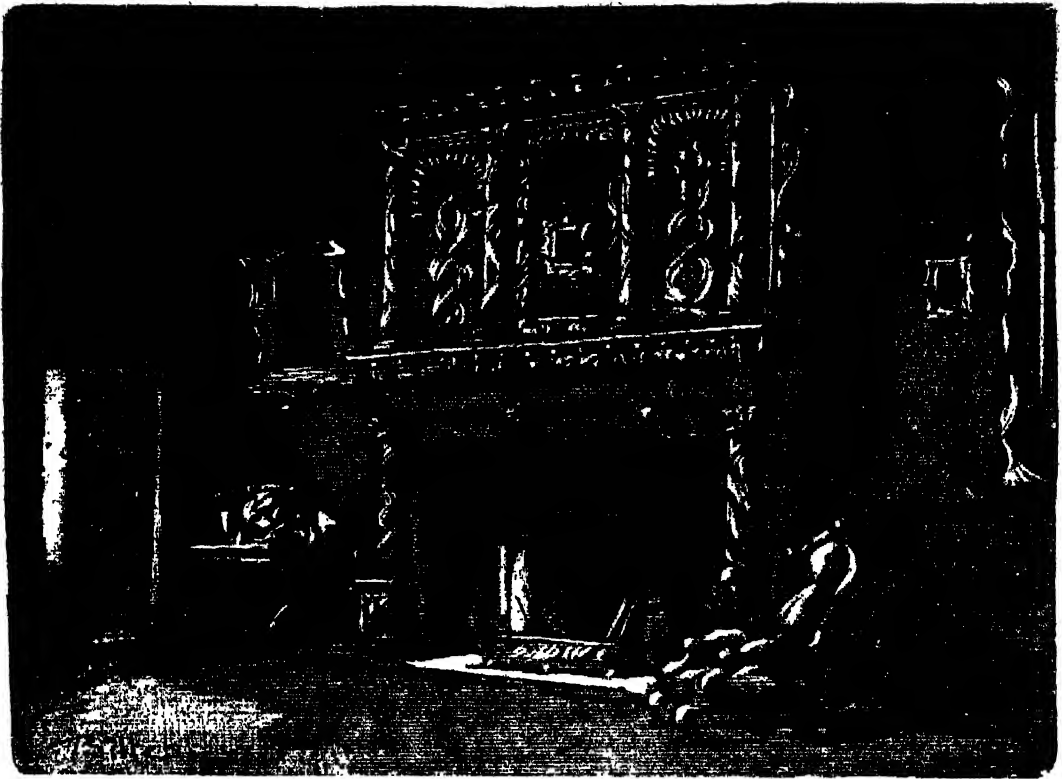
The residence in which Shakespeare is believed to have had access to a good library.

calves, and manifesting, as is asserted, tragic exuberance in acts of slaughter. What man has since lived, who, at so early an age, even with all the advantages of ablest teaching, and boundless stores of every kind of knowledge placed within his grasp, has attained one-tenth of his knowledge and varied experience of every sort and kind?

Whatever speculation may be indulged on this point, none is admissible as to the advantage availed of under the tuition of the ruling dominions of the Grammar School. There the future dramatist drank deeply of the trees of knowledge and wisdom, and though like other boys he would occasionally perhaps have preferred the wild liberty of truanting in neighbouring woodlands, indulging, as Benedick says, in "Much Ado About Nothing" (act iii., scene 1), "in the flat transgression of a schoolboy; who, being overjoyed in finding a bird's nest, shows it to his companion and he steals it," we may be sure that the Welsh parson, Sir Hugh Evans, in the "Merry Wives of Windsor" (act iv., scene 1)

in his accidence." Let us rather hope that the Stratford clerical tutor earned the same praise that the schoolmaster Holofernes does in "Love's Labour Lost," (act iv., scene 2) where the curate, Sir Nathaniel, says:—"Sir, I praise the Lord for you, and so may my parishioners; for their sons are well tutored





THE DRAWING ROOM, BILLESLEY HALL.

by you. . . . You are a good member of the commonwealth." The question of his classical attainments rests, as Charles Knight soundly puts it, "not upon the interpretation of the dictum of this authority or that, but upon the indisputable fact that the very earliest writings of Shakespeare are imbued with a spirit of classical antiquity, and that the allusive nature of the learning that manifests itself in them, whilst it offers the best proof of his familiarity with the ancient writers, is a circumstance which has misled those who never attempted to dispute the existence of the learning which was displayed in the direct pedantry of his contemporaries." "If," said Hales of Eton, "he had not *read* the classics, he had likewise not *stolen* from them."

We rightly assume without any hesitation, that William Shakespeare did receive, in every just sense of the word, the education of a scholar; and as such education was to be had at his own door, who can doubt that he was brought up here in the free Grammar School of his own town? How long he continued at this school is known to none; how he profited there, is known to

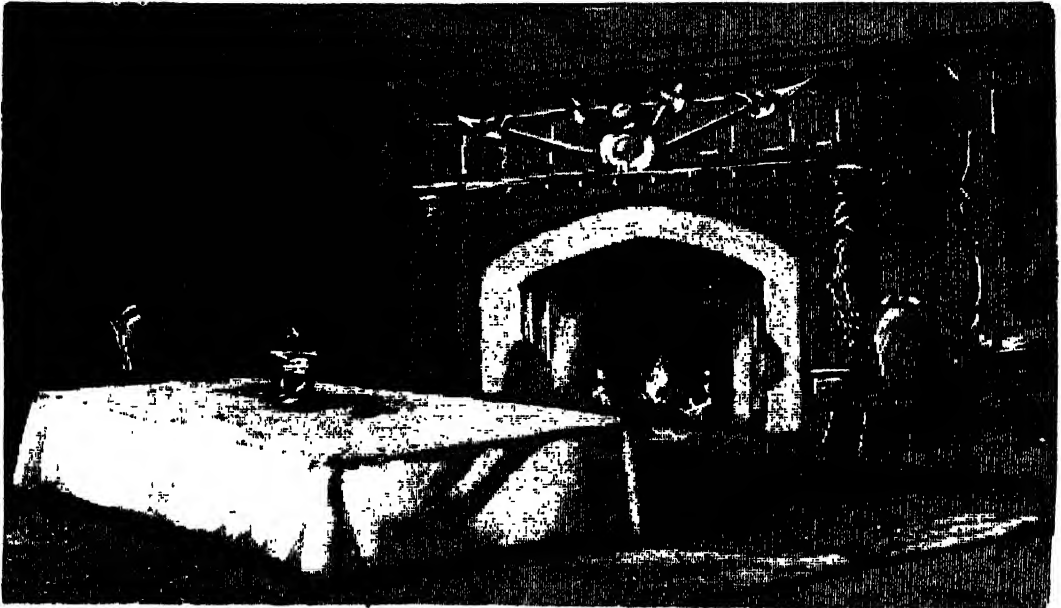
the whole world, enabling him to enter into the spirit of the classical writers, as well as to prepare him to profit by the reading of translations. How true all his classical allusions! that, for instance, in the "Midsummer Night's Dream,"—

"I was with Hercules and Cadmus once,
When in a wood of Crete they bay'd the bear."

All honour to Walter Roche, Simon Hunt and Thomas Jenkins, masters of the Guild School during Shakespeare's youth, for each may have helped to train the mind of one who to endless time shall continue the thought-inspiring genius of the world. Hunt was many years curate of the neighbouring village of Luddington. Ben Jonson, who recorded the "little Latin and less Greek" story, was fond of pointing an antithesis. He was, moreover, himself specially eminent for classical scholarship. According to the usual routine of studies in those old schools, a pupil was obliged to read a large quantity of Latin before commencing Greek at all. To have the credit of possessing a little Latin and Greek, in the estimation of "rare Ben," proves the poet to have been of liberal scholarship. It is

more than doubtful whether, in any Public Grammar School then existing in England, any pupils could begin Greek without a familiar acquaintance with at least Cæsar, Virgil, and Ovid, and perhaps also Horace. Surely such attainment in Latin was more than "a little." The rule in the Grammar School then was, not to enter on the study of Greek until the Latin had been well mastered. To know anything of Greek, therefore, Shakespeare must have been "well up" in his Latin, probably more than equal to nine out of every ten of England's youth, who, since Shakespeare's time, have entered Oxford or Cambridge, at periods, years his senior. In

Good Master Roche or Good Master Hunt—possibly both—found little difficulty in piloting their pupil from the Latin to the Greek. Who will venture to say that the pupil was not ahead of his dominies at the final termination of the educational process? However this may have been, modesty in the matter of attainments would be a distinguishing feature of the mighty mind. Before the conclusion of the reign of Elizabeth the most important works of the poets, historians, and philosophers of Greece and Rome were accessible to English readers, and though rude and uncritical, yet the early translations were sufficiently accu-



all probability he knew as much of both languages as could be learned by one who attended the town Grammar School until he was fifteen or sixteen, but never went to the University. There is nothing in his history, and still less in his writings, to make it necessary to suppose, as has very often been done, that for his knowledge of Roman affairs he was dependent entirely upon the very imperfect translations of Roman writers then extant. Examinations of the curriculum of the old Grammar Schools, in such instances as have been available, show conclusively that it was only a very small moiety of the pupils who "got into Greek." None but the cleverest boys ever attempted the Greek grammar, and it is more than probable that

rate for purposes of general information. Of these, Shakespeare would be an inquisitive and diligent reader, and hence he acquired that knowledge which has been received as proof of his classical attainments. It is difficult to pronounce as to his reading the languages of continental Europe, but his play of Henry V. proves his intimate knowledge of French, and all the tales whereon he grounded his plots existed either in French or English. Many were of Italian origin, and Italian literature was in high favour in his time, but, as Shakespeare might have known them through French or English translations, his knowledge of the originals cannot be absolutely inferred.

It has been already shown that his mother's

rudimentary teaching was an admirably-devised preparation for this school, so also that such earliest preparatory instruction was



given him by his good mother at home. Through her help letters were taught, syllables grew into words, and by aid of the horn book, with its transparent cover of horn, words soon grew into short sentences under her maternal tuition. There is something to be committed to memory:—

"That is question now;
And then comes answer like an A B C-book."
—*King John*, act i., scene 2.

The gradual progress of education can be readily traced from the first year of Edward VI., when was published by authority "The A B C, with the Pater Noster, Ave, Crede, and Ten Commandmenttes in Englysshe, newly translated and set forth at the Kynge's most gracious commandment." But the A B C soon became more immediately connected with systematic instruction in religious belief. The alphabet and a few short lessons were followed by the Catechism, so that the book containing the Catechism came

to be called an A B C book, or Absey-book. All this preliminary instruction, we may be assured, Shakespeare received from his mother, who well grounded him for his after Grammar School more advanced teaching. Towards the end of Edward's reign was put forth by authority "A Short Catechisme or Playne Instruction, conteynynge the Summe of Christian Learninge," which all schoolmasters were called upon to teach after the "Little Catechism" previously set forth. Such books were undoubtedly suppressed in the reign of Mary, but upon the accession of Elizabeth they were again circulated. A question then arises: did William Shakespeare receive his elementary instruction in Christianity from the books sanctioned by the Reformed Church? His father and mother were, beyond doubt, at the time of his birth, of the religion established by law. His father, by holding a high municipal office after the accession of Elizabeth, had solemnly declared his adherence to the great principle of Protestantism—the acknowledgment of the civil Sovereign as earthly head of the Church. The boy William was brought up unquestionably in the opinions which his father publicly professed, in holding office subject to his most solemn affirma-



tion of those opinions. The distinctions between Protestant and Romanist were then not so numerous or speculative as they afterwards became. But, such as they were, we



may be sure that William Shakespeare learnt the Lord's Prayer, his Catechism and Apostle's Creed from his mother in all sincerity; that he frequented the church in which he and his brothers and sisters were baptized; that he was prepared for the discipline of the Holy Guild School in which religious instruction by a minister of the Church was regularly afforded, as the end of the other knowledge there taught. He became tolerant, according to the manifestation of his after writings, through nature, and the habits and friendships of his early life. Probably his parents, in common with their neighbours, who held becoming respect for the faith of their forefathers, tolerated, and perhaps delighted in, many of the festivals and imaginative forms of the old religion, and even looked up for heavenly aid through intercession, without fancying that they were yielding to an idolatrous superstition, such as Puritanism came subsequently to denounce. The transition from the old worship to the new was not an ungentle one for the laity. The early Reformers were too wise to attempt to root up habits—those deep-sunk foundations of the past which break the ploughshares of legislation when it strives to work an inch below the earth's surface.

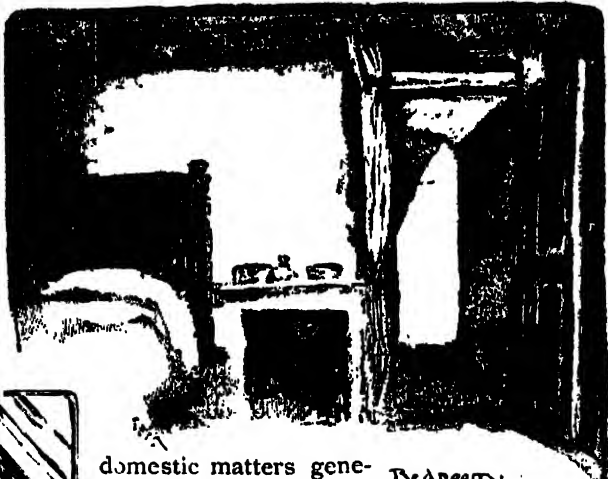
Shakespeare speaks always with reverence of the teachers of the highest wisdom,

by whatever name denominated. He has learnt, then, at his mother's knee the cardinal doctrines of Christianity: he can read. His was an age of few books. Yet, believing, as we do, that his father and mother were fairly - educated persons, there would be volumes in their house capable of exciting the interest of an inquiring boy—volumes now rarely seen and very precious. Some of the first books of the English press might be there; but the changes of language in the ninety years that had passed since the introduction of printing into England would almost seal them against an ordinary boy's perusal. Shakespeare, however, must have been a very extraordinary pupil, and would devour everything of printed form that came in his way. Caxton's books were essentially of a popular character; but, as he himself complained, the language of his time was greatly unsettled, showing that "we Englishmen ben born under the domination of the moon, which is never steadfast." Caxton's Catalogue was rich in romantic and poetical lore—the "Confessio Amantis," the "Canterbury Tales," "Troilus and Cresside," the "Book of Troy," the "Dictes of the Philosophers," the "Mirror of the World," the "Siege of Jerusalem," the "Book of Chivalry," the "Life of King Arthur." Here were legends of faith and love, of knightly deeds and painful perils—glimpses of history through the wildest romance—enough to fill the mind of the boy-poet with visions



of unutterable loveliness and splendour. The famous successors of the first printer followed in the same career; they adapted their works to the great body of purchasers; they left the learned to their manuscripts. What a present must "Dame Julyana Bernes" have bestowed upon her countrymen in her book of Hunting, printed by Wynkyn de Worde, with other books of sports! Master Skelton, laureate, would rejoice the hearts of the most orthodox, by his sly hits at the luxury and domination of the priesthood; Robert Copland, who translated "Kynge Appolyne of Thyre," sent perhaps the story of that prince's "malfortunes and perilous adventures" into a soil in which they were to grow into a "Pericles"; and Stephen Hawes, in his "Pass Tyme of Pleasure," he being "one of the Grooms of the Most Honourable Chamber of our Sovereign Lord King Henry the Seventh," would deserve

of Billesley Hall. There were pictures in some of those old books which of themselves would open a world to him. That wondrous book of "Bartholomæus de Proprietatibus Rerum," describing, and exhibiting in appropriate wood-cuts, every animate and inanimate thing, and even the most complex operations of social life, whether of cooking, ablution, and



Bedroom
in the
Gaul School Masters
House



The
Gaul
Room
in the
Gaul School

the especial
favour of the
descendant of
Robert Arden.
Subsequently
came the Eng-
lish "Frois-

sart" of Lord Berners, and other great books.

Many of the most interesting of the works named he would find on the possibly sparse shelves of Walter Roche, Simon Hunt and Thomas Jenkins, his kind Dominies, and if not he had a further resource in the library

domestic matters generally—the child Shakespeare would have turned over its leaves

with delight. "The Chronicle of England, with the Fruit of Times,"—the edition of 1527, with cuts innumerable—how must it have taken that boy into the days of "fierce wars," and have shown him the mailed knights, the archers, and the bill-men that fought at Poitiers for a vain empery, and afterwards turned their swords and arrows against each other at Barnet and Tewkesbury! What dim thoughts of early mutations must the young dramatist have received, as he looked upon the pictures of "The Boke of John Bochas, describing the Fall of Princes, Princesses, and other Nobles," and especially as he beheld the portrait of John Lydgate, the translator, kneeling in a long black cloak, admiring the vicissitude of the wheel of fortune, the divinity being represented by a male figure, in a robe, with expanded wings! Rude and incongruous works of art, ye were yet an intelligible language to the young and the uneducated; and the things ye taught through the visual sense were not readily to be forgotten!

But there were books in those days, simple and touching in their diction, and sounding alike the depths of the hearts of childhood and of age, which were the printed embodi-

ments of that traditionary lore that the shepherd repeated in his loneliness when pasturing his flocks in the uplands, and the maiden recited to her companions at the wheel. Were there not in every house "Christmas Carols,"—perhaps not the edition of Wynkyn de Worde in 1521, but reprints out of number? Did not the same great printer scatter about merry England—and especially dear were such legends to the people of the Midland and Northern Counties—"A lytell Geste of Robyn Hode"? Whose ear amongst the yeomen of Warwickshire did not listen

village dance to his magic pipe, even to the reverendicity of the frere leaping in profane guise as the little boy commanded, so that when he ceased piping, he could make the frere and the harsh stepmother obedient to his innocent will! There was beautiful wisdom in these old tales—something that seemed to grow instinctively out of the



when some genial spirit would recite out of that "lytell Geste"?

Lythe and lysten, gentylmen,
That be of fre borne blode,
I shall you tell of a good yeoman,
His name was Robyn Hode;
Robyn was a proud outlawe
Whyles he walked on ground,
So curteyse an outlawe as he was one
Was never none yfounde.

The good old printer, Wynkyn, knew that there were real, because spiritual, truths in these ancient songs and gestes; and his press poured them out in company with many "A full devoute and gosteley Treatise." That charming, and yet withal irreverend, "mery geste of the frere and the boy,"—what genial mirth was there in seeing the child, ill-used by his stepmother, making a whole

bosom of nature, as the wild blossoms and the fruit of a rich intellectual soil, uncultivated, but not sterile. Of the romances of chivalry might be read, in the fair types of Richard Pynson, "Sir Bevis of Southampton"; and in those of Robert Copland, "Arthur of lytell Brytayne"; and "Sir Degore, a Romance," printed by William Copland; also "Sir Isenbrace," and "The Knight of the Swanne," a "miraculous history," from the same press. Nor was the dramatic form of poetry altogether wanting in those days of William Shakespeare's childhood—verse, not essentially dramatic in the choice of subject, but dialogue, which may sometimes pass for dramatic even now. There was "A new Interlude and a mery of the nature of the iiiii elements"; and "Mag-

nyfyence; a goodly interlude and mery"; and an interlude "wherein is shewd and described as well the bewte of good propertes of women as theyr vyces and euyl conditions"; and "An interlude entitled Jack



Juggeler and Mistress Boundgrace"; and, most attractive of all, "A newe playe for to be played in Maye games, very plesaunte and full of pastyme," on the subject of Robin Hood and the Friar. The merry interludes

of the indefatigable John Heywood were preserved in print, in the middle of the sixteenth century, whilst many a noble play that was produced fifty years afterwards has perished with its actors. To repeat passages out of these homely dialogues, in which, however homely they were, much solid knowledge was in some sort conveyed, would be a sport for childhood. Out of books, too, and single printed sheets, might the songs that gladdened the hearts of the English yeoman, and solaced the dreary winter hours of the esquire in the hall, be readily learnt. What countryman, at fair, or market, could resist the attractive titles of the "balletts" printed by the good Widow Toy, of London—a munificent widow, who presented the Stationers' Company, in 1560, with a new table-cloth and a dozen of napkins—titles that have melody even to us who have lost the pleasant words they ushered in? There are:—

"Who lyve so mery and make suche sporte
As they that be of the poorer sorte?"

and:—

"God send me a wyfe that will do as I say;"

and, very charming in the rhythm of its one known line:—

"The rose is from my garden gone."

Songs of sailors were there also in those days—England's proper songs—such as "Hold the anchor fast." There were collections of songs, too, as those of "Thomas Whithorne, gentleman, for three, four, or five voices," which found their way into every yeoman's house when we were a musical people and could sing in parts. It was the wise policy of the early Reformers, when chantries had for the most part been suppressed, to direct the musical taste of the laity to the performance of the church service; and many were the books adapted to this end, such as "Bassus," consisting of portions of the service to be chanted, and "The whole Psalms, in four parts, which may be sung to all musical instruments" (1563). The metrical version of the Psalms, by Sternhold and Hopkins, first printed in 1562, was essentially for the people; and accustomed as we have been to smile at the occasional want of refinement in this translation, its manly vigour, ay, and its bold harmony, may put to shame many of the

feebler productions of our own feebler times. Sure we are that the child William Shakespeare had his memory stored with its vigorous and idiomatic English.

But there was one book which it was the especial happiness of that contemplative boy to be familiar with. When, in the year 1537, the Bible in English was first

printed by authority, Richard Grafton, the printer, sent six copies to Cranmer, beseeching the archbishop to accept them as his simple gift, adding, "For your lordship, moving our most gracious prince to the allowance and licensing of such a work, hath wrought such an act worthy of praise as never was mentioned in any chronicle in this realm." From that time, with the exception of the short interval of the reign of Mary, the presses of London were for the most part employed in printing Bibles. That book, to whose wonderful heart-stirring narratives the child listens with awe and love, was now and ever after to be the solace of the English home. With "the Great Bible" open before her, the mother would read aloud to her little ones that beautiful story of Joseph sold into slavery, and then advanced to honour—and how his brethren knew him not when, suppressing his tears, he said, "Is your father well, the old man of whom ye spake?"—or how, when the child Samuel was laid down to sleep, the Lord called to him three times, and he grew, and God was with him;—or, how the three holy men who would not worship the golden image, walked about in the midst of the burning fiery furnace;—or, how the prophet that was unjustly cast into the den of lions was found unhurt, because the true God had sent his angels and shut the lions' mouths. These were the solemn and affecting narratives, wonderfully preserved for our instruction from a long antiquity, that in the middle of the sixteenth century became

disclosed to the people of England. But more especially was that other Testament opened which most imported them to know; and thus, when the child repeated in lisping accents the Christian's prayer to his Father in Heaven, the mother could expound to him



The
Porch
of the
Guild Chapel



that when the Divine Author of that prayer first gave it to us, He taught us that the poor in spirit, the meek, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, were the happy and the beloved of God; and laid down that comprehensive law of justice, "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." We believe that the home education of William Shakespeare was grounded upon this Book; and that, if this Book had been sealed to his childhood, he might have been the poet of Nature, of passion—his humour might have been as rich as we find it, and his wit as pointed—but that he would not have been the poet of the most profound as well as the most tolerant philosophy; his insight into the nature of man, his meanness and his grandeur, his weakness and his strength, would not have been what it is.

As the boy advanced towards the age of seven, preparation for the Grammar School would be desirable. Charles Knight reminds us there would be choice of elementary books. The "Alphabetum Latino Anglicum," issued under the special authority of Henry VIII., might attract by its most royal and considerate assurance that "we forget not the tender babes and the youth of our realm." Learning, however, was not slow then to put on its solemn aspects to the "tender babes"; and so we have some grammars with a wooden cut of an awful man sitting on a high chair,

pointing to a book with his right hand, and with a mighty rod in his left. However persevering writers have been as to the parents being unread and incapable of writing, earnestness for their son's education is at least their due, so also was the earliest dawn of mind seized for its development. The Grammar School resolved on, preparation was begun. Lord Campbell believes that such of the sons of the neighbouring gentry attended the school as were enabled to comply with the conditions of being able to read and write. How interesting would be any record of the relative progress and capabilities of the boys occupying the forms of that room with the one great mind destined to survive throughout all ages! To the Grammar School, then, with some preparation, we hold that William Shakespeare goes, in the year 1571. His father is at this time chief alderman of his town; he is a gentleman now of repute and authority; he is Master John Shakespeare; and assuredly the worthy curate of the neighbouring village of Luddington, Simon Hunt, who was also the schoolmaster, would have received his new scholar with some kindness. As his "shining morning face" first passed out of the main street into that old court through





Tradition has it that Shakespeare received Holy Communion from this Sacred Chalice.

which the upper room of learning was to be reached, a new life would be opening upon him.

Neither Walter Roche nor Simon Hunt would need to apply the spur to their boy pupil, who, as described by an American writer, would easily get through the tenses of the verb "Love," or its Latin synonym "Amo." How it went, and he went! I love, loved, have loved, had loved, shall or will love, shall have loved."

He would dart through the cans, and the coulds, and the mights of the potential, and the mysterious contingencies of the subjunctive, till he rounded on to the trio of participles that brought up the rear of this marvellous cavalcade of deeds, probable and possible, present, past, and future, in the great art and action of loving. When he got to the prepositions, did they puzzle him as they have boydom ever before and since? Did he grasp the definition that they were created to connect words and show the relation between them? Then, what thought he of those queer contrivances termed "conjunctions," that ought to connect, but didn't? Was the "interjection," with its oh! ah! and alas! a God-send to him in the midst of the fog? Was "parsing" a wonderful process to him? Little could he have opined that couplets from his own English rhyme should in after ages be "transposed," or *alias* mutilated,—paraphrased, or *alias* butchered, . . . by millions of school-boy grammar-aspirants. His mighty intellect—even then, long before getting into the teens—would realize that we should *never* be done with the tenses until we have done with time! That the world is full of them! That the world is made of them! That for the sturdy, iron present tense, full of facts and figures, knocks and knowledge, we must look among the men in middle life—the diggers and workers of the world; the men who, of all others, have discovered, for the very first time, at forty or forty-five, that the present tense is *now*; that in the home, shop, warehouse, the field, and on decks, the real, living *present* reigns supreme. That for the bright, golden, joyous future—full of the tones of silver bells of beating hearts, merry tongues and merry feet, we must look in our swarming streets and schools,

or beneath soft blankets at firesides. Further, did he not know that they who wear the silver livery of time, that linger tremblingly amid the din and jar of life—whose voices, like a failing fountain, are not musical as of old—that they *are* the melancholy past! We know he preached to us that "cold obstruction claims *all* times for its own—glowing action the present; hope, the future; and memory, the past!" Had he with us to unlearn "One Pluperfect,"—"One Future?" Yea, he thanked God with us that, in this world of ours, there are a myriad! What were his thoughts on "I shall be," and "I might have been," the former the music of youth, sweet as the sound of silver bells; fresh as

"The breezy call of incense-breathing morn; "

the latter the plaint of age, the dirge of hope, the inscription for a tomb. The one trembles upon thin pale lips, parched with "life's fitful fever"; the other swells from strong, young hearts, to lips rounded and dewy, with the sweetness of hope and the fullness of strength. The one is timed by a heart that flutters, intermits, flutters, and wears out; while that of the other beats right on, in the bold, stern march of life. "I shall be" and "I might have been!" He would feel how great toil and trouble, time and tears, many human hearts record in these little words—the very *stenography* of life; and how like a bugle-call is that "I shall be" from a young soul strong in prophecy. "I shall be—victorious yet" murmurs the man in the middle watch, who had been battling with foes till night fell, and in praying, like the Greek, for dawn again, that "he may see to fight." "I shall be," faintly breathes the languishing girl upon her couch of pain—"I shall be better to-morrow, or to-morrow"; and she lives on, because she hopes on, and she grows strong with the "shall be" she has uttered. And



the strong man armed, who has "fought the good fight," and has "kept the faith," when they that sustained his extended hands through the battle are departing, and no Joshua to bid the departing "sun stand still," as he looks beyond the rugged hills of the world, and sees a window open in Heaven, and a wounded hand put forth



in welcome, lays aside the armour he has worn so long and well, and, going down into the dark river, he utters, with a hope glorified to faith, "I shall be over the Jordan tomorrow."

Among the heaps of rubbish bearing on the education of the great one who embodied in the most splendid forms all the foremost incidents in human annals, and all the strongest passions of the human heart, none deny his prodigious attainment even in boyhood. We have it distinctly proved that he must have entered the Grammar School well grounded for a boy of seven years of age; probably no lad had then or since sat on its benches so well prepared for the learning offered, "without money and without price,"

at Jollyffe's fountain. His mother had done her duty well, and her boy, panting for information, was a ready recipient of all that her sound education, gentle in its every thought, enabled her to impart. He was her first son and only surviving child; this alone would lead her to bestow upon him more than an ordinary amount of education. Above all, we know that only a few weeks after William's birth, the plague broke out in Stratford. It was raging throughout the Continent at the time, and only a year before had made fell ravages in London. Between July and December nearly one-sixth of the population of Stratford had fallen its victims; the remainder were in stupefaction at its ravages and the sadness and alarm prevailing in its deserted streets. The houses held by its deadly hand had all a red cross marked on the door, with the inscription "Lord have mercy upon us!" The horror of the hour left its impression on his early manhood, evidenced in "Love's Labour Lost," act v., scene 2:—

Write, "Lord have mercy on us," on those three;
They are infected, in their hearts it lies;
They have the plague, and caught it of your eyes.

His mother had already suffered the grief natural to the calling from earth two children, and would, at staying of the plague, regard the one remaining child as given to her solicitous care, born to her anew. It was only human nature that she should bestow double care on the education of the one surviving son, the thoughts as to whose education would stir all her mind; moreover, she could not have failed to perceive in her boy the germs of unusual mental gifts. The task of preparing him for the conditions of the Jollyffe school—*i.e.*, that he should be able to read—was in no feature deputed, but fulfilled with a mother's earnest avidity by herself. Robert Ascham's "Schoolmaster" had just appeared; women of Mary's education would, in face of her thoroughly realized responsibilities and duties, fall under its influence. Its perusal, though helpful in the science of imparting knowledge, would add to her labours, inasmuch as Ascham had broached new-fangled ways of teaching, upsetting previous modes. Mary was anxious that his entry into the Grammar School should prove that he had not been neglected—that, in the phrase of the time, he was "well parented." The acquisition of reading was a more difficult task then than now, for a boy, in addition to learning the Roman letters, had to master the black

letter alphabet. It was a rule of the school that the boys should reside in the town. Henley Street was only a short walk from the Guild, to and from which his mother would often find excuse to accompany him, and help him with encouraging words.

There is unquestionable evidence of the immortalization of Simon Hunt, as Holofernes in "Love's Labour Lost," and Thomas Jenkins, as Sir Hugh Evans in the "Merry Wives," for, with the exception of Pinch in the "Comedy of Errors," and of Sir Nathaniel in "Love's Labour Lost," these are the only schoolmasters met with in his works, although Pinch is depicted less as a teacher than a wizard, and Sir Nathaniel is described as a curate. We accept as beyond all doubt that Hunt lived on terms of close intimacy with the Shakespeare family; and whether there be any truth in the supposition that Holofernes was modelled from John Florio, there are traits in Florio and in Hunt which may have been woven together to form the portrait, and the invitation from a pupil's parents might apply to the one as well as to the other. The scene in the "Merry Wives," (act iv., scene 1), where Sir Hugh examines the boy Page—he is not named William without reason—in the presence of his mother, must have had its prototype in the poet's own experience as a schoolboy. The examination probably took place when Walter Roche had been invited to dinner by his parents, just as related by Holofernes in "Love's Labour Lost" (act iv., scene 2): "I do dine to-day at the father's of a certain pupil of mine." We may therefore consider that Roche or Hunt stood for Sir Hugh, Mrs. Shakespeare for Mrs. Page, and some old woman in the neighbourhood for Mrs. Quickly, and we thus obtain a complete picture from the poet's own childhood. To have made the examination take place before the mother, and not before the father, is a very natural feature; the latter being so much occupied with business, and probably no Latin scholar, he would hardly pay much heed to his boy's Latin studies. The picture gains in striking truthfulness and charm when we bear in mind that Page was, and now is, a name not uncommon in Stratford. In the play, Evans concludes the examination by saying, "he is a good sprag memory," and the words sound as if they had come straight from the lips of the Guild Dominie, and who will gainsay the unbounded memory powers of the pupil?

Sufficient importance has not been given to the fact of the several masters of the Guild

Schools in Shakespeare's time having been good scholars in the literature of the period as well as classical. It should also be remembered that a known attachment subsisted between master and pupil in the case of Walter Roche and Simon Hunt, which increased with the great intellectual powers of the more than apt youth, and continued in manhood, and left its impression on the whole after-life of the poet. Scarcely any mention occurs of the other two masters, Walter Roche and Thomas Jenkins, the former of whom does not appear to have been in holy orders at the time, as he practised as a lawyer in Stratford, though he must afterwards have taken upon him the ministerial office, having become Rector of Clifford, and had a daughter baptised there in 1575. Walter Roche, there is little doubt, was the attorney with whom young Will had business relations during the period intervening between quitting the Grammar School and setting out for London. Such evidence as exists points clearly to this fact. Great legal knowledge is evident throughout his writings, so much so that Lord Chief Justice Campbell has said "he was a master of the legal profession." Stratford aldermen were fond of law as was



St. Chancel
of the
Guild
Chapel.

Sir Thomas Lucy and other Puritans of the neighbourhood given to persecuting such brethren as failed to join in anathematizing "the old faith." Here was a cause of abundant business, and it would need long heads successfully to join issues in the numerous suits known to have been under process. Young Shakespeare would glory in such suits; most likely Walter Roche would be attorney for defendants. Will's ardour would be stimulated to the utmost stretch of any legal knowledge he may have acquired through the fact of the Lucy worryings of his father, and which he was of an age to remember and mark in any opportunity

and for which he had been paid with the liberality generally marking all business transactions of the professional player, who has through all time shared gains with authors in no mean spirit. When sojourning in London, attending on Walter Roche, he would most likely quarter with some one or other of the king's players; at any rate, he would be sure to wander over London Bridge into Southwark, and hunt them up. After his legal business of the day was over, Southwark would be his resort; his eye and heart dwelt on play-writing as his future career, and the very fact of meeting his old friends in their headquarters at London, and



presented. No legal reports of these, or, indeed, of any other suits, have come to us, but we know there was at that time much contention of law among the citizens of Stratford, and frequent journeys to London during the sittings of the courts. May we not go further and say that their visit in conjunction with Walter Roche enabled young Shakespeare to learn from the mouths of the then leading actors, whose acquaintance he had made on occasions of their visits to Stratford and Coventry, all that was going on in the theatre world? The theatre proprietors had experience of the Stratford youth's aptitude in adapting and dressing up pieces to the needed mark of popularity, and it is more than likely he may ere then have ventured on some successful production of his own,

the opportunity it afforded of seeing for himself the great money rewards they were reaping, would suffice to settle his resolve and determine on an early removal to the mart where alone existed the demand for the high mental products he alone had to offer. When enjoying evenings with his Stratford-made theatrical friends, he would learn from proprietors themselves the great straits they were in for popular pieces, and the high pecuniary reward awaiting any writer who could hit the public taste and requirement of the hour. Young as he was, he united the gifts of wondrous genius with consummate business knowledge and tact. He saw at a glance the golden opportunity placed in his pathway, and unhesitatingly determined to quit the law and take revenge on the Puritan



knight of Charlecote in a manner more in accordance with his taste than any the ablest defence of suits-at-law, a revenge which should attach to his father's enemy through all future ages.

It is a well-known fact that Shakespeare had numerous friends in London, notably those made in Stratford under the circumstances named. If he made frequent journeys there in connection with Walter Roche's law business, and there is good reason to believe such to be the case, the opportunities of profitable use of his literary power are manifest. We know he was on terms of friendship with both James and Richard Burbage, who are asserted by Malone, the most reasonable writer as to Shakespeare's early life in the Metropolis, to have been Warwickshire men. The name of Burbage is widely scattered over Warwickshire and the neighbouring counties, and one more families of the name had settled in Stratford towards the close of the sixteenth century; one John Burbage, in 1555, was a bailiff there, and on 12th of October, 1565, one Ursula Burbage was married to Robert Greene. Nothing can be more probable than that young Burbage had acted with the servants of the Earl of Leicester in Stratford, and that Shakespeare made his acquaintance there. His love of the theatre and firm conviction that he could turn his talents to good account, in some sort of connection with it, a belief possibly at the moment undefined though firmly believed and held, explains his desire to get to London. John Heminge also, the subsequent publisher of the first folio edition of his plays, appears to have sprung from Stratford or Shottery, where it is stated two families of the name resided. Elizabeth Heminge, daughter of one John Heminge of Shottery, was baptised at Stratford on March 12th, 1597, and Richard Heminge, also of Shottery, had a son baptised 7th March, 1570. It has been

contended, and very foolishly, that these Heminge's were merely occasional visitors, this on the ground of the name not occurring in the parish register, the fact being no register existed prior to 1558. It has been supposed that the eminent comedian, Thomas Greene, held family connection with Shakespeare; doubtful as this may be, it is not improbable that the Thomas Greene who was buried at Stratford on the 6th of March, 1589, was the father of the actor and a relative of Shakespeare. Richard Field also, who was in no way connected with the stage, but a printer, removed from Stratford to London simultaneously with Shakespeare. Here, then, it is clearly established that he would at once find friends should he need them, but the great poet was a careful, prudent man, who realized that he had left a young family behind. He could not be other than reliant on his own great resources.

Froude throws good light on the condition of England so far as concerns its literature at the period. The general awaking of national life, the increase of wealth, refinement, and leisure, was accompanied by a quickening of English intelligence, which found vent in an upgrowth of Grammar Schools, in the new impulse given to classical learning at the Universities, in a passion for translations, which familiarized all England with the masterpieces of Italy and Greece, and above all in the crude but vigorous efforts of Sackville and Lyly after a nobler poetry and prose. The full glory of her new literature broke on England with Edmund Spenser, of whose life we know as little as of Shakespeare's. From Sidney's house at Penshurst came his earliest work, the "Shepherds' Calendar"; in form like Sidney's own "Arcadia," a pastoral, where love and loyalty and Puritanism jostled oddly with the fancied shepherd life. The appearance of the "Faerie Queen" is the one critical event in the annals of English poetry; it settled, in



BIT OF OLD MANOR HOUSE, BISHOPTON.

fact; the question whether there was to be such a thing as English poetry or no. The new English drama was beginning to display



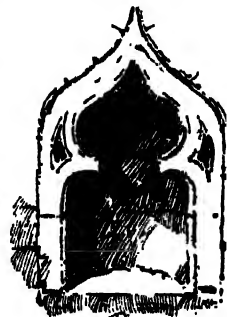
Ancient
Chalice in
Bishop's
Chapel
1571

Tradition has it that Shakespeare and Anne received Holy Communion from this sacred chalice.

its wonderful powers, and the work of Marlowe had already prepared the way for the work of Shakespeare. No great imaginative poem had broken the silence of English literature for nearly two hundred years when Spenser landed at Bristol with the "Faerie Queene." From that moment the stream of English poetry flowed on without a break. There have been times, as in the years which immediately followed, when England has "become a nest of singing birds"; there have been times when song was scant and poor, but there never has been a time when England has been wholly without a singer. The "Faerie Queene" was received with a burst of general welcome. It became the delight of every accomplished gentleman, the model of every poet, the solace of every soldier. The poem expressed the very life of the time. The features of English drama that startled the moral temper of the time and won the deadly hatred of the Puritan, its grossness and profanity, its tendency to scenes of horror and crime, its profuse employment of cruelty and lust as grounds of dramatic action, were derived from the Italian stage. The real origin, however, of the English drama lay not in any influence from without, but in the influence of England itself. The temper of the nation was dramatic. Ever since the Reformation the Palace, the Inns of Court, and the University had been vying with one another in the production of plays; even under Henry VIII. it was found necessary to create a "Master of the Revels" to supervise them. Every progress of Elizabeth from shire to shire was a succession of shows and interludes. From the earlier years of her reign the new spirit of the Renaissance had been pouring itself into the rough mould of the mystery plays, where allegorical virtues and vices, or scriptural heroes and heroines had handed on the spirit of the drama through the middle ages. Adaptations from classical pieces soon began to alternate with the religious "Moralities;" and an attempt at a livelier style of expres-

sion and invention appeared in the popular comedy of "Gammer Gurton's Needle"; while Sackville, Lord Dorset, in his tragedy of "Gorboduc," introduced the use of blank verse as the vehicle of dramatic dialogue. But it was not to these tentative efforts of scholars that the English stage was indebted for the amazing outburst of genius, which dates from the moment when the Earl of Leicester's servants erected the first public theatre in Blackfriars.

It has generally been assumed that Shakespeare left the Grammar School in 1578, and it has become a rule to note his age as exceptionally young for the so-called completion of education; so also the having "begun Latin," as schoolboys term it, at eight years old, is also named as something extraordinary. So far as completion of education went we very well know that his leaving school, in common with other great intellects, would be the entry on the threshold rather than the completion of education, and as to the beginning Latin in his eighth year, it was the usual course pursued in all the old grammar schools. The necessity of education was more than in the dawn, and parents were anxious for their children's more advanced progress commencing so soon as they had mastered the preliminary elements. We need not go back to Shakespeare's day for proof on this point, as within the last sixty years forward boys in the Foundation Grammar Schools read their Delectus at nine years of age. It is ungenerous towards the granite old classic dominions, as well as untrue, to disparage the education given in those days; so also it is very questionable if the three centuries that have rolled by since Simon Hunt called on the boy Shakespeare to "come up and say his lessons," exhibit all the educational advancement with which the generations are credited. It was downright steady work in those times; early in the morning was accounted more of than now; boys were made to be in the school-room at six, none later than seven, winter and summer mornings, and with plenty of cold water sousing as a means of dispelling morning somnolent tendencies. This



Place in old
Bishop's Chapel

gave a full hour of wideawake vigorous preparation before settling down to the work of the day, the mind having been brought to a knowledge of its urgency by an hour of *silentium* the previous evening. Then, again, school-work was kept constantly and uniformly going for close on forty-six out of each year's fifty-two weeks. Boys did not get their seven weeks at Midsummer, and an equally large slice of Father Time's year for Christmas and other "vacations." The miracle is how boys now "connect" after allowance of so lengthened intervals between the modern

although there may not have been learners for cigarette and short pipe skulking. The poor man's son, though homed in an East-end slum, if a clever pushing lad, anxious to peg up into an atmosphere higher than his parents breathed, has qualifications after fulfilling "the standard" requirements, such as rank him higher for office or other work than his better clothed, better fed competitor. There are hundreds of these boys who, in evening's leisure self-preparation, have acquired shorthand, and can note down their employer's instructions as to correspondence and office work, and write needed letters for after signature of principals, thereby thrusting out of the running the old-style clerks of hitherto systems. They who, through biographies, write flippantly of the great master's proficiency as a schoolboy, and of the teaching power of his day, will do well to remember that his contemporary, Sir Christopher Wren, was employed when under fifteen years of age as assistant anatomical demonstrator to the greatest lecturer of that age.



Almshouses.

"sessions." No sooner have they fetched up the lee-way and get straight abreast in good form, than it is time to go home and break the rope of study for the holidays. If the sons of the middle class are to hold their own with boys in the Board Schools, there must be a change in this feature of schooling, or they will be found nowhere in the after race of life. Even now, if a youth aspires to a position for which the ordeal of competitive examination has to be surmounted, ordinary candidates need to resort to the crammer, who has to put them through a process adopted in Surrey with young poultry, though in the majority of instances without success. When the writer was a boy at an English Foundation Grammar School, the year's holidays were a fortnight at Christmas and four weeks for a Midsummer run. Three days at Easter formed the only other recess, thus giving close on forty-six weeks for work. Boys were then none the worse for being kept regularly at it; they played their fives and rounders between morning school and dinner with equal vigour of modern cricket,

It is gratifying to know that the Jollyffe venerable school is in these our present days in a more vigorous and efficient state than ever. Under its able head-master, the Reverend R. S. De Courcay Laffan, it is affording a course of education in touch with the times, not a little helped by his wife, one of our most gifted authoresses. Mr. Laffan has himself been the means of making a most interesting discovery bearing on a period which may be said to bring Shakespeare into closer connexion with the school than has hitherto been known. Being of opinion that something might be found concealed inside the ceiling and roof, he induced the authorities to allow the removal of the former, with the object of examination. Having secured assent to the work, it was entered upon during the School Easter holidays of 1886, and in the north-east end, between the flat ceiling and open roof, were discovered five panels, one of which displays a white rose with a red heart, the other a red rose with a white heart, clearly symbolizing the union of the houses of York and Lancaster by the marriage of Henry VII. with Elizabeth



A known resort of Dominic Hunt and Shakespeare when a boy.

of York. The foundation of the school is 1482, and the marriage took place in 1486.

Wren was by no means an exception. Even the fraudulent Chancellor Bacon, whom Donnelly and his ilk seek to foist upon the world as Shakespeare, who commanded learning of the highest and most subtle class at an age probably unknown before, is an example of what was achieved in those days; in fact, the great men of that time had one and all to thank hard-worked, persevering school days for their after success in life.

To come down to modern times, it will be seen that most really great men have been early in their school duties and were mostly taught in grammar schools. Pitt, who, as Prime Minister, carried Britain through the most critical epoch of her existence, was a mere boy in those trying days; he read and enjoyed his *Virgil* when eleven years of age. Many in number have been our great lawyers as examples of this classic proficiency in boyhood. Lord Eldon and his equally eminent brother had mastered *Horace* when very young, and to-day we see in Lord Halsbury a Lord Chancellor who, at a very youthful hour, mastered Latin and Greek, as did his brilliantly-gifted father, Dr. Stanley Lees Giffard, whose verses when a youth at Trinity College, Dublin, have never been surpassed in elegance and power. Let it not be supposed that we are imputing the least blame to the head-masters of our great public schools. They one and all earnestly endeavour to do whatever may advance the learning of their boys; they see the evils to which allusion is made, and will be foremost with a remedy when parents see the wisdom of holiday curtailment.

The supposition that Shakespeare acted in some capacity in an attorney's office during the interval between leaving school and his marriage, is not contradicted by any one known fact of his life; on the contrary, it harmonizes most completely with everything we know of him. A very significant fact is to be found in the well-known satirical illusion in the "Epistle to the Gentlemen Students of the two Universities," by Thomas Nash, which stands as a preface to Robert Green's "*Menaphon*" (1589), and was first pointed out by Malone. The passage in Nash is as follows: "It is a common practice nowadays among a sort of shifting companions that run through every art and thrive by none, to leave the trade of *Noverint*, whereto they were born, and busy themselves with endeavours of art, that could scarcely Latinize their neck bone if they should have need; yet English Seneca read by candle-light yields many good sentences, as 'blood is a beggar,' and so forth; and if you entreat him far, in a frosty morning, he will afford you whole translets, I should say, of tragical speeches." The passage has formed subject for much dispute, but it seems unquestionably to include Shakespeare, and hence, as describing him in his early years to have been a "*Noverint*," i.e., an attorney's clerk or assistant. Much and good evidence has been adduced in support of this. Shakespeare in his works exhibits not only an absolute correct acquaintance with legal matters, but shows an undeniable liking and habit for using legal phrases. No other poet has ever approached him in the exercise of this habit, although the other poets of the Elizabethan period make much more frequent use of legal

phrases than is done now. The astonishing fact is, that the most eminent English lawyers have been unable to point out a single error in his legal matters, and all have expressed their admiration of and surprise at this fact. Halliwell Phillips thought that Shakespeare might readily have acquired his legal phrases from his parent's law suit,—a very weak conjecture. If it be said that Shakespeare might have had opportunity enough of becoming acquainted with legal phraseology from his own experiences in life, such might perhaps account for his law knowledge, but not for his undoubted liking for legal

any other branch of knowledge; mere observation or tuition is absolutely useless in regard to it.

Lord Chief Justice Campbell has left an exhaustive inquiry into this matter, and he, who, if anyone, may be deemed fully entitled to pronounce judgment in the case, gives a most eloquent confirmation of the supposition. It is also a significant fact that Lord Campbell makes use of Shakespeare's own words, "*Thou art clerkly, thou art clerkly.*" The two points of the case he establishes irrefutably show, in the first place, that Shakespeare exhibits in his works a striking and almost



By tradition a resort of Shakespeare and the Rev. Simon Hunt.

phrases, or for the fact that such phrases are met with in his youthful poems as well (for instance, in his "*Venus and Adonis*," "*The Lover's Complaint*," etc.), and moreover with no less frequency or correctness than in the works of his later years. It is impossible, in any one of his works, to recognise any increase of legal knowledge, in so far as it is not determined by the subject, nor is it possible to observe any progress in his acquaintance with such phraseology; accordingly it must have been acquired before his appearance as a poet. However great facility may be granted to genius of accidentally, as it were, acquiring knowledge of a positive kind, as opposed to systematic study, still, English law in particular, unquestionably demands a greater degree of professional training than

unparalleled liking for, not to say delight in, weaving legal expressions, similes, and imagery into his poems, and secondly, that in not one instance—although all have been examined personally by Lord Campbell—is there an error; on the contrary, every case shows the positive knowledge of a man intimately acquainted with the subject, whose language frequently even excels that of professional lawyers. Not a few passages in the poet's works are so full of legal expressions and imagery, that it would be impossible to understand them properly without a knowledge of English law. Thus for example, Sonnet 46, of which Lord Campbell says: "This sonnet is so intensely legal in its language and imagery, that without a considerable knowledge of English forensic procedure, it cannot be fully understood." Well known,

too, are Hamlet's observations on a lawyer's skull.

"Why may not that be the skull of a lawyer? Where be his quiddits now, his



Cupboard of boxes of Shakespeare date, formerly in Holy Guild School, now in Henley Street Museum.

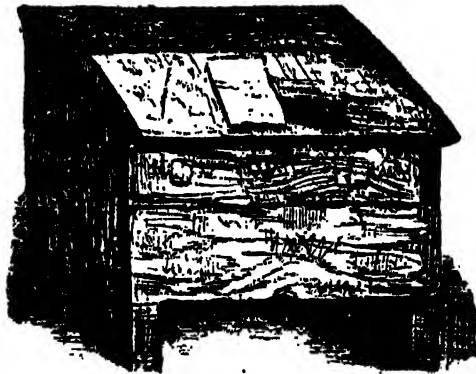
quilllets, his cases, his tenures, and his tricks? Why does he suffer this rude knave now to knock him about the sconce with a dirty shovel, and will not tell him of his action of battery? Humph! This fellow might be in 's time a great buyer of land, with his statutes, his recognizances, his fines, his double vouchers, his recoveries. Is this the fine of his fines, and the recovery of his recoveries, to have his fine pate full of fine dirt? Will his vouchers vouch him no more of his purchases, and double ones too, than the length and breadth of a pair of indentures? The very conveyance of his lands will hardly lie in this box; and must the inheritor himself have no more? Ha?"

Can anyone read this wondrous passage without being convinced that he who penned it was well versed in the law, its forms and technicalities?

It cannot be denied that the marvellous versatility of Shakespeare's genius naturally creates hesitation in some minds as to his having been engaged in legal employment during the period between his marriage and removal to London; they argue that by the same reasoning there is equal justification for inferring that he had been a sailor, a soldier, a surgeon, or a physician, for was there any calling with the peculiarities of which he has not exhibited similar familiarity? The universality of his genius,

combined with that intuitive knowledge which he seemed to possess, of almost every art and occupation, as of every phase of human experience, enabled him to treat all topics with equal ease and intimacy. It is proved, however, that his familiarity with law reigns greatly paramount.

There have ever been two parties as to the amount of Shakespeare's scholarship. As to the precise character and the amount of it, there has been much controversial conjecture, some writers maintaining, on the evidence of his works, that he received a thoroughly classical education. There is clearly truth in this conclusion. Gildon says: "The man who doubts the learning of Shakespeare hath none of his own"; and Hales of Eton, who may be classed as a contemporary (1584-1656), declares "that there was no subject of which any poet ever writ, but he would produce it much better treated of in Shakespeare." As time advances, we certainly approach nearer and nearer to a general admission of the truth of the assertion. Becoming credit has never been given the Holy Guild School or the masters who ruled and taught in it during Shakespeare's pupilage. Roche, Hunt, and Jenkins were all three friends of Shakespeare, and continued so for the whole time intervening between school learning and going to London afterwards. With Walter Roche it is more than probable he was associated in some way or other in law business. Roche's acquirements must have been more than considerable, as we have seen him figuring as attorney and priest. When men talk of the paucity of books available for the great author's study, they forget that each of these rulers over the school would have a private library of



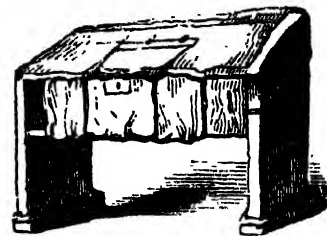
Shakespeare's Desk, in Henley Street Museum, formerly in Holy Guild School.



his own, proportioned to his attainments, and the need growing out of these; the aggregate of the three must have been for the time large. In addition, it is certain he had the run of a good library at Billesley Hall, and there is good reason to believe there was no scarcity of books at the clergy homes at Wootton Wawen, Beaudesert, Lapworth, and other neighbouring parishes, to which he was constantly resorting. Charlecote Hall possessed, perhaps, one of the best classical libraries in Warwickshire, and whatever may be said of Sir Thomas Lucy's Puritanical dislike to the poet's father and the Ardens, it may not have extended to a youth whose already fame and attainments gave the neighbourhood just cause of pride. Education, though not as diffuse as in the next and after centuries, was, what there was of it, of higher quality. Where, from their day until now, are we to look for better educated women than Elizabeth, Lady Jane Grey, or Mary Queen of Scotland? How did these attain to their excellency? The knowledge of classical mythology was a common possession in the Elizabethan period. In his earliest works, Shakespeare occupied himself mainly with classical subjects, and it was only gradually that he threw off the pedantry of classic allusions. Like our John Bright and Cobbett, he acquired a right understanding of and appreciation for the relation in which his mother tongue stood to the Latin language and for the formation of words. Theobald says: "No poet has ever made such extensive use of the Latin element in the English vocabulary as Shakespeare." It may be added that he uses it everywhere with pro-

priety and ingenuity, and good results in describing ridiculous pedantry, boastful foolishness, and vainglorious ignorance. See the Latinized phrases used by Armado, the flourishes and quotations used by Holofernes and Sir Nathaniel, and to the comical manner in which Mrs. Quickly and the two Gobbos misapply their words.

Without joining any partisan theories, the point of Shakespeare's scholarship, even in his youthful days, is simple enough. His dominions of the Holy Guild knew the wondrous planet they had to deal with, and they becomingly directed the orb aright. He conceived the spirit and character of classic antiquity more correctly, and in a truer and grander spirit than the mere book scholars, who would boast of being able to read Latin and Greek authors without dictionary aid; many were able to write the languages as well. Shakespeare stands pre-eminent above all other poets in that the Guild teaching made his Roman plays unique. No better evidence of partisanship need be cited than the asserted inability of his father and mother, and especially his daughter, Judith Quiney, to write or even sign their own names. The fact that Dr. Hall and Thomas Quiney, his two sons-in-law, were men possessing a knowledge of foreign languages, proves the natural conclusion that the society of New Place was that of cultivated folk in a degree allowing him to dispense with the society of the Stratford tradesmen. It is clearly established, by the preface to a medical work of Dr. Hall, "that he had been a traveller acquainted with the French tongue," and it is reported of Thomas Quiney, in the same work by his brother-in-law, that "he was of a good wit, expert in tongue, and very learned." It should be borne in mind that this is no gossip of

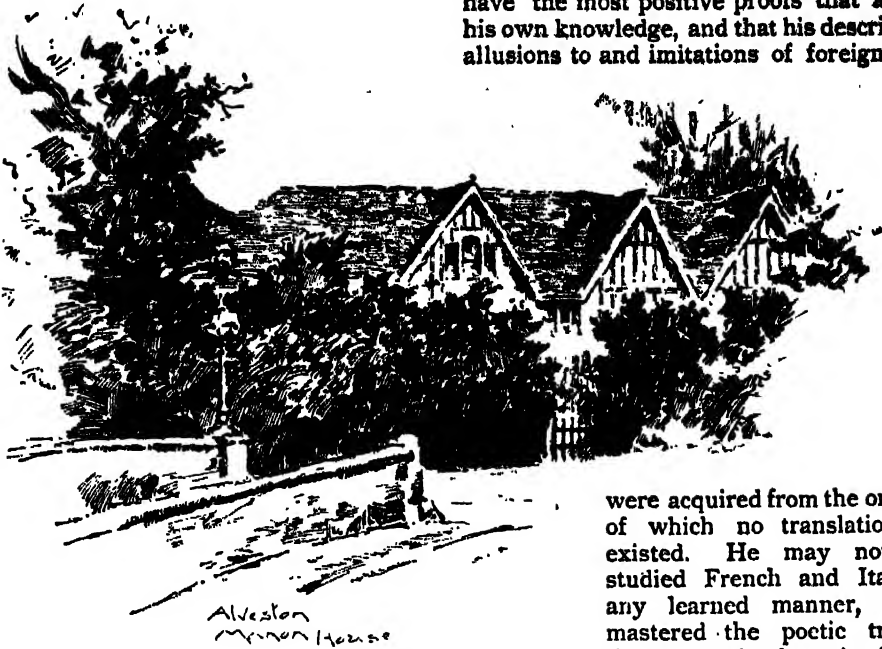


Traditioned as Shakespeare's Desk, now in Henley Street Museum.

the Aubrey class; it is on record as the preface, by one Cooke, to this medical work of Dr. Hall, and is authority of an entirely indisputable character. It proves the class

of friends revolving round our great author in his retirement at New Place to be precisely such as we would expect of one whose edu-

mand all the elements of human knowledge and of social culture, be deficient in any feature needed for the composition of the marvellous productions of his brain? We have the most positive proofs that all was his own knowledge, and that his descriptions, allusions to and imitations of foreign works



cation had been so well cared for at the Holy Guild School, and whose powers and acquisitions of knowledge so vastly exceeded all his contemporaries. Sir Thomas Lucy the younger died in 1604. He was the son of Shakespeare's father's adversary, and is understood to have been not only a man of liberal education, but without the more than Puritanical feelings of his father; indeed, at his father's death, the hatchet was buried, and we hear no more of Charlecote religious persecution; on the contrary, there is every reason to believe that young Shakespeare had the run of the Charlecote library, and may have enjoyed the friendship of its owner atoning for hard dealings from the father.

Let no more be heard of the lack of education in Shakespeare's family; the wonder is that such idle and unreasonable nonsense has held the public ear so long. It is only needed to reflect on his great thirst for knowledge of every kind, his extraordinary power of perception and facility for learning. None knew better than he that it must be through culture he could gain for himself the position aspired to. Can Shakespeare, who had at his com-

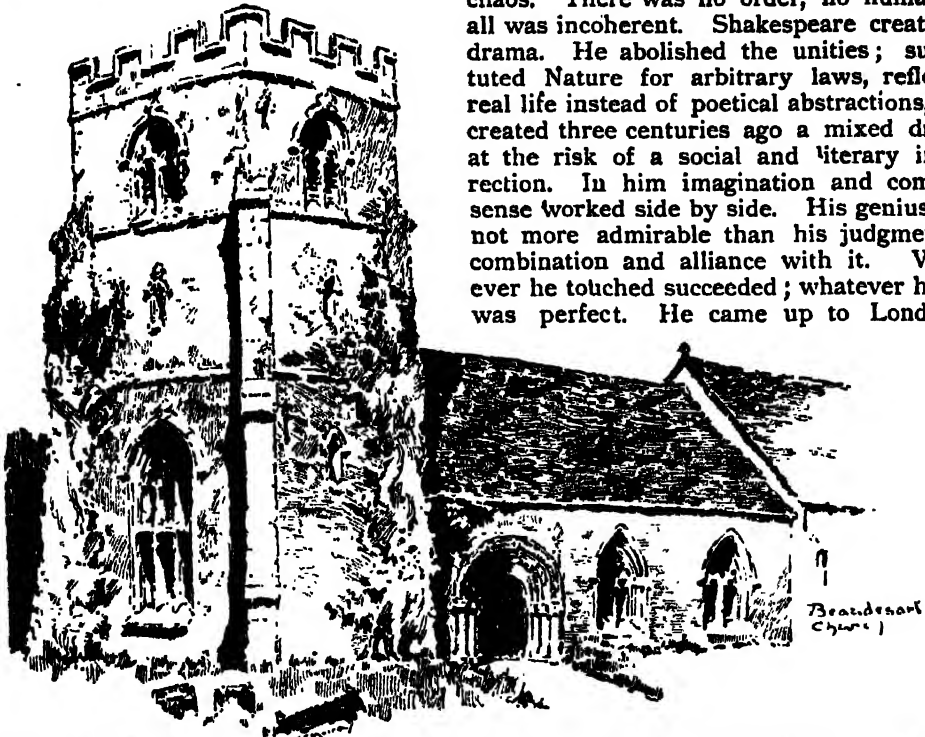
were acquired from the originals, of which no translation then existed. He may not have studied French and Italian in any learned manner, but he mastered the poetic treasures they contained. A brilliant

proof of his knowledge of languages, and which may be cited with his humorous use of the Latin-English element, is the unrivalled manner in which Dr. Caius slaughters the English tongue in the "Merry Wives." Those who have ever heard a Frenchman "clip" our tongue will admit that he has no rival; so also the wondrous love-scene between Kate of France and Harry the Fifth



of England. It has no approachable equal in our language.

Enough dirt has through many generations been freely bespattered. As time advances, the whole world will be more and more humiliated that the memory of the greatest of mankind should have been subjected to indignity. The Grammar School of the Holy Guild will exalt its pride in having been his nursing mother, and the memory of Robert Jollyffe as its founder will go down to all time as Stratford's greatest benefactor. Future Shakespeares



Roman Catholic sources indicate that the Vicars of Beaudesert, Lapworth, and Wootton Wawen met frequently as friends in Shakespeare's youthful days at Shottery Chantry.

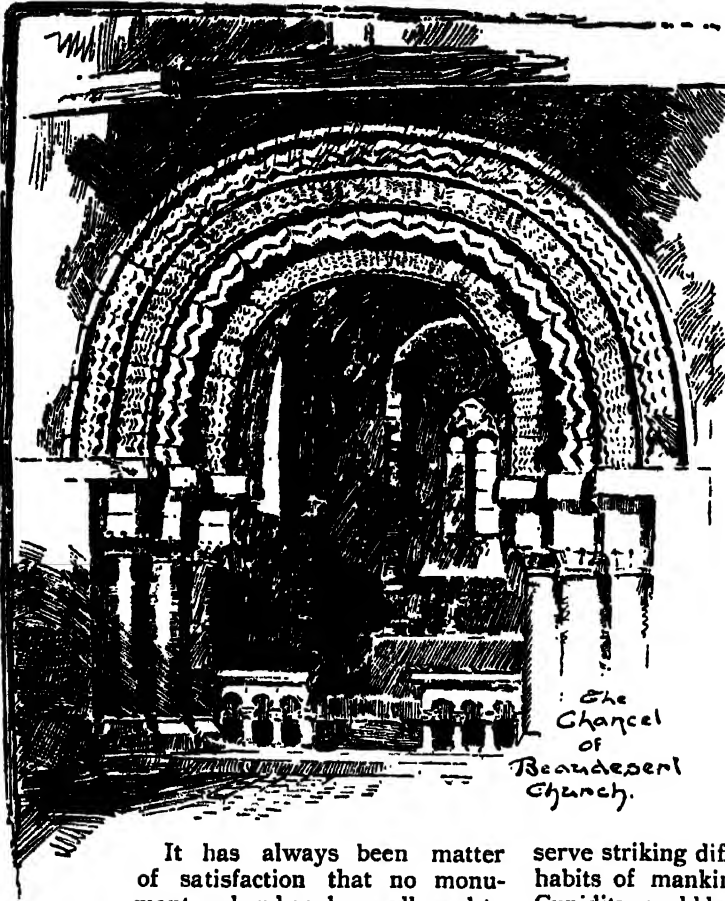
will hardly come out of its forms, though every boy educated within the walls of the venerable schoolhouse will ever have on his lips and heart the name and example of him, the greatest mind of the world, who at dawn of day entered its portals and drank deeply, though meekly, at its fountain of knowledge.

In common with all others first entering on life's labours, his foot must have been first placed on the lower rung of the ladder, but within a short year or two, had ascended to a position of authority and influence. He had not only become a player, but a writer of plays. His industry is seen to have been

as surprising as his genius. The constancy and rapidity with which he worked, constitute one of the many wonders of his career. Upon an average, he produced a play every four months; and when the quality of his plays is remembered—every word a drop of gold, pearls rained down with a profuse hand—their quantity becomes still more wonderful. To estimate him properly, we must remember the revolution he brought about in dramatic poetry. The "mighty lines" in the plays of his predecessors were, so far as construction and nature went, a profound chaos. There was no order, no humanity, all was incoherent. Shakespeare created a drama. He abolished the unities; substituted Nature for arbitrary laws, reflected real life instead of poetical abstractions, and created three centuries ago a mixed drama at the risk of a social and literary insurrection. In him imagination and common sense worked side by side. His genius was not more admirable than his judgment in combination and alliance with it. Whatever he touched succeeded; whatever he did was perfect. He came up to London a

stranger and penniless. Within about thirteen years he produced twenty-eight or twenty-nine plays, made a handsome independence, returned to his native town, wrote nine or ten plays more, including the most poetical, romantic and youthful of them all—*The Tempest*—and died there on his fifty-second birthday. His death, like his works, left nothing unfinished—no broken fragment of time to reckon up; it completed a circle, and might be thought to have been almost anticipated in his own affecting lines—

"We are such stuff
As dreams are made of, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep."



The
Chancel
of
Beaudesert
Church.

It has always been matter of satisfaction that no monument-maker has been allowed to establish himself near the sacred precincts of Holy Trinity or the Guild. There has ever been enough of sentiment to keep its sordid huckstery from intruding its bar and booth up to the very cheeks of death and the grave. The clank of hammers creative of cherub heads, or what, to some minds—suffering under their just-occurred bereavement—is irresistible, the cutting laudatory words of the flown spirit, is not here. Commerce and death-rest do not mingle here. In such close proximity to the great dust, sorrows drop in the summing-up recollections of passages he has writ, giving a comforting view of the never-ending future behind the veil. This mighty limner is present, all threads of other thought snap in the loom, and the shuttle carries a new yarn, and the fabric stretches out a new pattern. God's truths, whenever approaching to fading out among the clang of men and the fictions of the real, will here revive and gain form and power. The invisible grows more

real than the substantial. Nothing seems so wild and extravagant as human life. Nothing so sweet and to be desired as flying away from it. The soul hears itself called from the other world. Nor does it require that supreme architect, the imagination, to fashion forth the illustrious gate and the blessed city. It is good and profitable to journey and rest here, to the shrine of the world's poet, for here, indeed, the eye beholds things unutterable by the tongue.

The poet who has delineated human life and character under every variety of passion and humour had wondrous experiences of mankind. The loftiest imagination must work upon the humblest materials. As Charles Knight tells us: "In his father's home, amongst his father's neighbours, he would observe

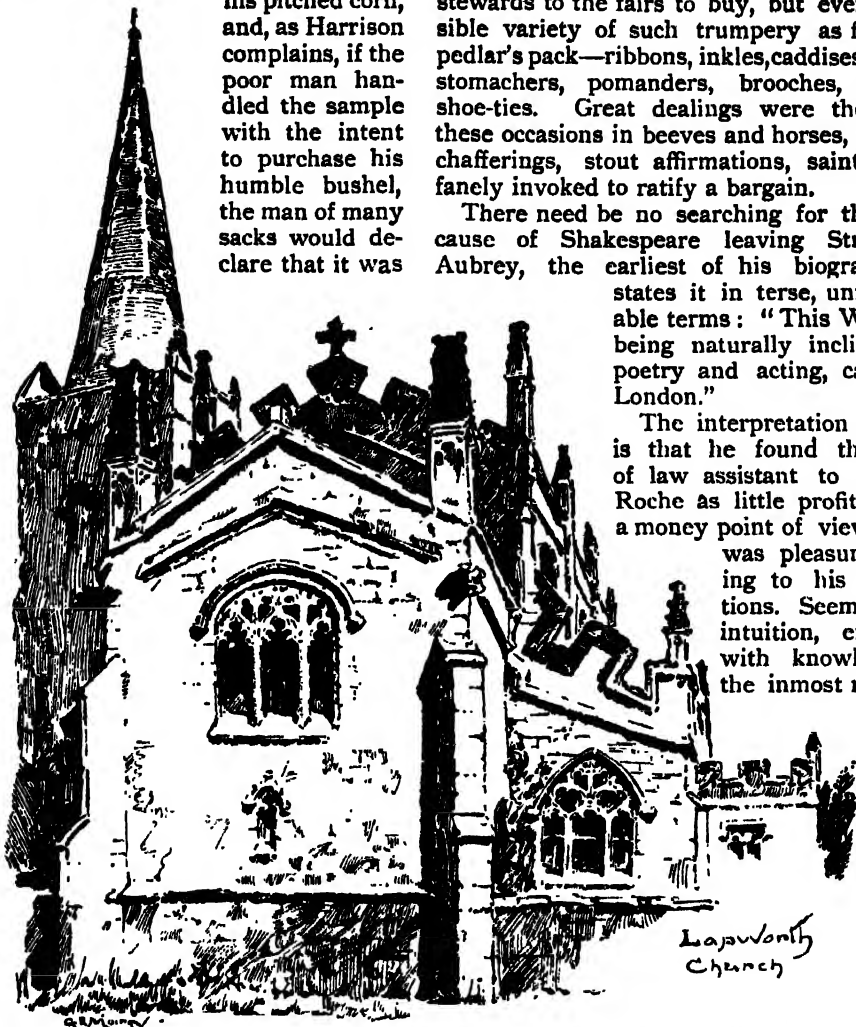
striking differences in the tempers and habits of mankind obvious even to a child. Cupidity would be contrasted with generosity; parsimony with extravagance. He would hear of injustice and of ingratitude, of uprightness and of fidelity. Curiosity would lead him to the bailiff's court, and there he would learn of bitter quarrels and obstinate enmities; of friends parted "on a dissension of a doit"; of foes who "interjoin their issues" or worry some wretched offender. Small ambition and empty pride would grow bloated upon the pettiest distinctions; and "the insolence of office" would thrust humility off the causeway. There would be loud talk of loyalty and religion, while the peaceful and the pious would be suspected; and the sycophant who wore the great man's livery would strive to crush the independent in spirit. Much of this the observing boy would see; but much also would be concealed in the general holowness that belongs to a period of inquietude and change. The time would come when he would penetrate into the depths of these things; but meanwhile what

was upon the surface would be food for thought. At the weekly market there would be the familiar congregation of buyers and sellers. The housewife from her little farm would ride in gallantly between her panniers laden with butter, eggs, chickens, and capons. The farmer would stand by his pitched corn, and, as Harrison complains, if the poor man handled the sample with the intent to purchase his humble bushel, the man of many sacks would declare that it was

gear, Sheffield whittles, and rings with posies. At the joyous Fair-season it would seem that the wealth of a world was emptied into Stratford; not only the substantial things, the wine, the wax, the wheat, the wool, the malt, the cheese, the clothes, the napery, such as even great lords sent their stewards to the fairs to buy, but every possible variety of such trumpery as fill the pedlar's pack—ribbons, inkles, caddises, coifs, stomachers, pomanders, brooches, tapes, shoe-ties. Great dealings were there on these occasions in bees and horses, tedious chafferings, stout affirmations, saints profanely invoked to ratify a bargain.

There need be no searching for the real cause of Shakespeare leaving Stratford. Aubrey, the earliest of his biographers, states it in terse, unmistakable terms: "This William, being naturally inclined to poetry and acting, came to London."

The interpretation of this is that he found the post of law assistant to Walter Roche as little profitable in a money point of view as it was pleasure-yielding to his inclinations. Seemingly of intuition, endowed with knowledge of the inmost recesses



Old Roman Catholic families associate the Vicar of Lapworth with other neighbouring clergy as friends of Shakespeare in early youth.

sold. The engrosser, according to the same authority, would be there with his understanding nod, successfully evading every statute that could be made against forestalling, because no statutes could prevail against the power of the best price. There, before shops were many and their stocks extensive, would come the dealers from Birmingham and Coventry, with wares for use and wares for show, horse-gear and women-

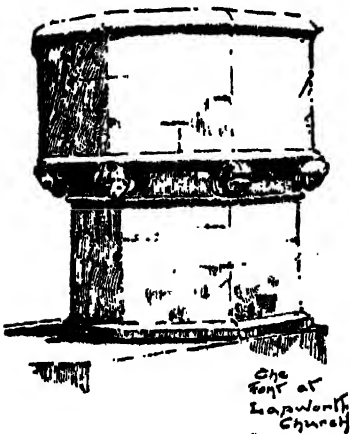
of the human heart, and being of nobly affectionate nature, the setting his fellow-creatures by the ears and making a profit of their ill-natured folly and weakness was revolting to him. So long as he could be kept to work redress of his own parental wrongs, all would be prosecuted with energy and, we may be assured, with ability surpassing conception, but outside this the heart was without sympathy. He felt himself a

painter of humanity, not a designing groveller in its erring frailties; his pen-and-ink canvases were at the earliest moment of production eagerly sought for, and the palm of his hand had been anointed with the players' gold. Let it not be credited that the mere dross itself, the "money!" "trash!" though his babies at Shottery were budding forth two at a time, was in itself a bribe. The players were genial, loving, generous, quick-brained, and with them he decided to throw in his lot.

Bearing upon this deeply interesting period of the poet's life, there comes down to us a remarkable and very precise account of what the performances of the time consisted. It is written by one John Willis, and was printed in 1639. Willis was born in the same year with Shakespeare. In this book he describes what he had seen when a boy, in a country town. His description, read in connection with the foregoing entries, is quite as satisfactory as if it had said in express words that the same thing was seen by Will Shakespeare, another boy, in another town of merry England, "all in the olden time." The extract is in these emphatic words:

"UPON A STAGE-PLAY WHICH I SAW WHEN
I WAS A CHILD.

"In the city of Gloucester the manner is (as I think it is in other like Corporations) that, when players of interludes come to town, they first attend the Mayor, to inform him what nobleman's servants they are, and so to get licence for their public playing;



The
Font at
Lapworth
Church.



The
Chance.
of
Lapworth
Church.

and if the Mayor like the actors, or would show respect to their lord and master, he appoints them to play their first play before himself and the aldermen and Common Council of the city; and that is called the Mayor's play where every one that will comes in without money, the Mayor giving the players a reward as he thinks fit to show respect unto them. At such a play my father took me with him and made me stand between his legs, as he sat upon one of the benches, where we saw and heard very well.

"The play was called 'The Cradle of Security,' wherein was personated a king or some great prince with his courtiers of several kinds, amongst which three ladies were in special grace with him, and they, keeping him in delights and pleasures, drew him from

his graver counsellors, hearing of sermons and listening to good counsel and admonitions, that in the end they got him to lie down in a cradle upon the stage, where these three ladies, joining in a sweet song, rocked him asleep, that he snorted again, and in the meantime closely conveyed under the clothes wherewithal he was covered a vizard like a swine's snout upon his face, with three wire chains fastened thereunto, the other end whereof being holden severally by those three ladies, who fall to singing again, and then discovered his face, that the spectators might see how they had transformed him, going on with their singing. Whilst all this was acting, there came forth of another door at the farthest end of the stage two old men, the one in blue with a sergeant-at-arms, his mace on his shoulder, the other in red, with a drawn sword in his hand, and leaning with the other hand upon the other's shoulder, and so they too went along in a soft pace, round about by the skirt of the stage, till at last they came to the cradle, when all the Court was in greatest jollity, and then the foremost old man with his mace struck a fearful blow upon the cradle, wherewith the courtiers, with the three ladies and the vizard, all vanished; and the desolate prince, starting up barefaced, and finding himself thus sent for to judgment, made a lamentable complaint of his miserable case, and so was carried away by wicked spirits. This prince did personate in the moral the wicked of the world; the three ladies, pride, covetousness, and luxury; the two old men, the end of the



Welford
Church.

Through tradition closely associated with Shakespeare.

world and the last judgment. This sight took such impression in me, that when I came towards man's estate it was as fresh in my memory as if I had seen it newly acted."

Here we have the record of John Willis, born in 1564, of his play-seeings as a child in the city of Gloucester. It is no straining of belief to realize five years later, when John Shakespeare, in 1569 bailiff of Stratford-upon-Avon, ordered the payment from the public purse of nine shillings to the Queen's players for the exhibition of a merry interlude, his son Will, then five years old, stood in like manner between his father's legs as he sat upon one of the benches, and saw a like notable "gest," and that the said

Will continued to witness the other exhibitions of the like kind, which occurred from time to time in his native county town, during the whole period of his boyhood. The inference which these records suggest is strengthened by others of a later date. The first evidences of Shakespeare being in London is a list of names of certain persons in that city, engaged as players and as proprietors of the playhouse. In this company, of which Shakespeare is one, occur the names of several other actors from the same county of Warwick, and one at least from Stratford itself.



Baddesley Clinton Church

The village of Baddesley Clinton was a known resort of Shakespeare.

This same Grammar School building would greatly help to give the theatrical bend to the then youthful mind of the great author. The ground-floor room underneath the schools, then the hall of the Guild, afterwards the Town Hall, was the invariable theatre of Stratford. The elevation for the court at one end would form the stage; and on one side is an ancient separate chamber to which the performers would retire. With a due provision of benches, about three hundred persons could be accommodated. The ancient accounts of the chamberlain of the bailiff of Stratford exhibit a number of payments made out of the funds of the Corpora-



Statue of Shakespeare, by Roubilliac, in front of Stratford Town Hall.

tion for theatrical performances. In 1569, when John Shakespeare was chief magistrate, there is a payment of nine shillings to the Queen's players, and of twelvepence to the Earl of Worcester's players. In 1573 the Earl of Leicester's players received six shillings and eightpence. In 1574 "my lord of Warwick's players" have a gratuity of seventeen shillings, and the Earl of Wor-

cester's players, of five and sevenpence. In 1577 "my lord of Leicester's players" received fifteen shillings, and "my lord of Worcester's players" three and fourpence. In 1579, to "my lord Strange's men the xith day of February, vs.," and "to the Countess of Essex's players, xivs. vid." In 1580, "to the Earl of Darby's players, viiis. ivd." It is, therefore, an established certainty that some three or four sets of players acted in this building during the short period of the first sixteen years of Shakespeare's life.

Thus, then, unquestionably it was. The great dramatist found in these rude exhibitions that which was congenial. He found in these wandering and clumsy theatricals the elements of his own glorious day-dreams. His soul was touched, rudely it may be, but on that chord which yielded its deepest and sweetest music. To join his fellow-townsmen, who had already embarked in this business, and to seek by it in the great metropolis the means of living and of fame, was certainly one of the most natural and probable of all possible results. It was instructive. His leaving Stratford for London at the time he did needs no further explanation. It requires no fables of deer-stealing and prosecution, no interposition of paternal misfortunes, no fiction of domestic disquietudes and treasons. William Shakespeare found himself among the players for the same reason that the birds in spring-time find themselves among the branches. He became a writer of plays under the influence of a law as genuine as that which draws sweetness from the Æolian harp when kissed by zephyrs, or that which opens the throats of the feathered tribes when vernal airs and genial skies warm them into melody. It was Nature herself prompting her favourite son to his appropriate work. The strolling players and the merry interludes at the little town on the Avon were to the youthful bard the mirror of Merlin, revealing to himself the secret of his own marvellous powers. The powers were there, needing only an occasion to put them in motion.

We now understand why the Bailiff of Stratford paid the players out of the public money. The first performance of each company in this town was the bailiff's, or chief magistrate's play; and thus, when the father of William Shakespeare was bailiff, the boy might have stood "between his legs, as he sat upon one of the benches." It would appear from Willis's description that "The



This old mansion at Rowington is known to have been occupied by a member of the Shakespeare family, but cannot be correctly traced; for over 150 years it has been known as Shakespeare Hall.

"Cradle of Security" was for the most part dumb show. It is probable that he was present at its performance at Gloucester, when he was six or seven years of age; it evidently belongs to that class of moral plays which were of the simplest construction. And yet it was popular long after the English drama had reached its highest eminence. When the pageants and mysteries had been put down by the force of public opinion, when spectacles of a dramatic character had ceased to be employed as instruments of religious instruction, the professional players who had sprung up founded their popularity for a long period upon the ancient habits and associations of the people. Our drama was essentially formed by a course of steady progress, and not by rapid transition. We are accustomed to say that the drama was created by Shakespeare, Marlowe, Greene, Kyd, and a few others of distinguished genius; but they all of them worked upon a foundation which was ready for them. The superstructure of real tragedy and comedy had to be erected upon the moral plays, the romances, the histories, which, through the influence of his

magic hand, became popular in the very first days of Queen Elizabeth, and continued to be so beyond the close of her long reign, unto our own time.

Who can enter the quaint old room on the street floor of the Guild Grammar School, the Guildhall of his day, without being impressed with a conviction that it was in this very place he received his first bias to the stage, from witnessing here the performances of strolling actors. In degree we all know from youthful experience how great is the fascination surrounding theatrical heroes and heroines. The youthful bard would hardly have rested short of making the personal acquaintance of some of the players at the tavern or private lodgings where they stayed. Lord Campbell, who has discussed this feature of the first direction of the great mind to dramatic bias as of his subsequent study of the law, is of opinion that he actually took part in some of these local performances as a prompter, or possibly to replace some other actor. How more than interesting would it prove to know what were the plays which first introduced him to the realms of dramatic literature, but here we must be

content with little more than mere conjecture. All their performances were given in the Guildhall, under the Guild Grammar School. Puritanical notions, it is true, held sway at times, proved by an entry in the Corporation accounts, 1622, "Paid to the King's players for not playeing in the hall, vjs." It is a grand theme, the early development of such a mind as Shakespeare's, narrow as the field of such a quiet town as Stratford would seem to present, yet there was ample for such a mighty intellect as knew no equal. Of natural scenery and objects, as in more advanced years, of men and manners, the bright-eyed boy must have been a sedulous and enthusiastic observer. And we must remember that the ancient towns

chivalrous displays it would be folly to doubt.

Much light is thrown on the civic affairs of Stratford through examination of the Chamberlain's accounts, which, in Shakespeare's time, seem to have been models of correctness as to fact, and kept with the greatest precision. The poet's father at one time acted as auditor of the accounts: his having served in this capacity of examiner and checker of figures afford distinct disproof of the statement as to his inability to write. The following is a specimen transcript from these accounts. The heading given shows the date of the Hall or Council Meeting at which the two Chamberlains handed in their statement of account for one

*Stratford
burgess
council
Dont 2nd the January Anno Regni R^{is} Elizabeth^e R^{is}.
the sum of pence 100*

Receipt

*Imprimis at the buriall of Bramley of Drayton for 1st bell 2nd my d
Item at the buriall of Anthony m^r of Drayton for 1st bell 2nd my d
Item at the buriall of David Jones m^r for 1st bell 2nd my d
Item at the buriall of John Handm^r m^r for 1st bell 2nd my d
Item at the buriall of Hansgrove of Ludington 2nd my d
Item for the bell at the buriall of John P^r of Ludington 2nd my d
Item for the bell & pall at the buriall of old m^r of Ludington 2nd my d
Item for the bell for p^r of p^r m^r 2nd my d
Item for the bell & pall for m^r of Ludington 2nd my d
Item for the bell for p^r of Ludington 2nd my d
Item for the bell & pall for George Handm^r m^r 2nd my d
Item for the bell & pall for the bell & pall 2nd my d*

of Warwick and Coventry with their historical associations, Evesham with its grand monastic remains, and the noble castle of Kenilworth, were all within accessible distance. The celebrated visit of Queen Elizabeth to the Earl of Leicester there took place in the summer of 1575, when Shakespeare was eleven years old. That he witnessed those magnificent festivities and

year, viz., from the Feast of St. Michael, 1578, to the Feast of St. Michael, 1579.

The body of the transcript is a portion of a record of their receipts, and refers to the charges for ringing the bell at a funeral (which was fourpence) and for the use of the pall (which was fourpence), a total of eightpence, when the bell was tolled and the pall used also. Close examination of

the grand old Register of Holy Trinity supplies the date of death of each individual named.

STRATFORD BURGUS.

Ad aulam ibidem tent xx^o die Januarij Anno Regni domine Elizabethæ Regine nostre nunc, etc., vicesimo secundo.

RECEIPTS.

Imprimis, at the buriall of Bramley, of Drayton, for ye bell - - - - - iiijd.
Item, at the buriall of Antony Wolston's wife, for the bell and the pall - - - - - viijd.
Item, at the buriall of David Jones' wif, for the bell - - - - - iiijd.
Item, at the buriall of John Bawdwine's wife, for ye bell - - - - - iiijd.
Item, at the buriall of Barthrope, of Luddington - - - - - iiijd.
Item, for the bell at the buriall of John Fisher's child - - - - - iiijd.
Item, for the bell and pall at the buriall of old Winmys - - - - - viijd.
Item, for the bell for Spere-pointe's wif - - - - - iiijd.
Item, for the bell and pall for Mr. Shaxper's daughter - - - - - viijd.
Item, for the bell for Mr. Trusselle's child - - - - - iiijd.
Item, for the bell for Yeate, of Luddington - - - - - iiijd.
Item, for the bell and pall for Georg Bardelle's wife - - - - - viijd.
Item, Thomas Robins' wife, the bell and pall - - - - - viijd.

On comparing these civic charges for bell and pall use, we find each of the burials recorded in Stratford-on-Avon parish register:—

1578. January 12. John Bramley.
" " 12. Elizabeth, wife to Anthoni Wolson.
" " 25. Elizabeth, wife to David Jones, wh. her sonne John.
(No record of burial.)
" February 23. Thomas Bartrap.
" " 23. Abram, sonne to John Fisher.
" " 26. John Wilmons.
" " 28. Jane, wife to Robert Sperepoynt.
1579. April 4. Anne, daughter to Mr. John Shakspeare.
" " 8. John, sonne to Mr. Thomas Trussell.
" June 24. William Yate, of Luddenton.
" " 20. Jeyes, wife to Georg Bardell.
" July 3. Anne, wife to Thomas Robins.

Chamb. acct. of Edward Bushell, taken 14 Jany., 34 Eliz., 1591, for one year ended at Xmas:—

Paid to Thomas Godwine for the bell claper - - - - - vjs. viijd.
Paid to the roper for two short ropes for the greate bell - - - - - vjd.
Paid to a workeman that holpe Toole about the bell - - - - - vjd.
Paid for the bell which was borrowed of the maisters - - - - - viijli.
Paid for the charges of the bell - - - - - iiijli. xjs. xd.
Paid to Mr. Wilson for two planckes which lye under the bell frame - - - - - xvjd.

Acct. of Henry Wilson, taken 24 Jany., xxxv. Eliz., for one year ended at Xmas:—

RECEIPTS.

Receaved of Mr. Parsons at a Court holden the 19 of January, of money gathered for the bell - - - - - vs. vjd.

PAYMENTS.

Payd to Abell the joiner, the first day of Aprill, for mending the wheeles of the little bell at they chappell - - - - - viijd.
Payd to Clemson and another to help hym aboute the greate belle - - - - - xijd.
Payd to goodman Godden for makinge the buckelle to the baldricke and trussinge up the belle - - - - - ijs.
Payd to John Knight for a bauldricke - - - - - viijd.

Edward Hunt, his accompt., made the 9th of January, anno 1606:—

PAYMENTS AND CHARGES ABOUT THE BELL.

Imprimis, for the taking downe of the bell - - - - - iijs.
Item, for drinke and victualls upon Dankes and his people that did helpe him that day that the bell was caste on - - - - - xvijjd.
Item, to Richard Greene and Harrington, for watchinge the night after the bell was caste - - - - - xijd
Item, to Spenser and others, for helpinge us out of the pit with the bell, and for getting her into the chappell, in money and drinke - - - - - ijs. viijd.
Item, for hempe that he did use about the bemould - - - - - ijs. viijd
Item, for wax and rosen and tallow, when he did caste the bell - - - - - ijs
Item, to Richard Dankes, for mettall, and his charges goinge to Warwicke about the bell - - - - - vijs. iijjd.
Item, to goodwife Tomlins for mettall - - - - - iijs. viijjd.
Item, for five loades of clay that he did use about the mound and the furnace - - - - - ijs. iiijjd.
Item, for two loades of stoun - - - - - vs.
Item, to Mr. Waterman for ston - - - - - iijs. vjd
Item, for four score and seven poundes of morter mettall - - - - - xlijs. vjd
Item, for three hundred of mettall and the cariage of hit from London - - - - - ixli. xvs
Item, to Dankes, for castinge of the bell - - - - - viijli.
Item, to Mrs. Smithe, for a pott - - - - - xxs.
Item, for two bagges of coles to dry the mouldes - - - - - ijs.
Item, for wood for to melt the bell withall - - - - - xs.
Item, to Thomas Hornebee, for iron worke for the bell - - - - - ixs
Item, for iron that we bought - - - - - vs. vjd.
Item, to Watton, the smithe, for iron worcke about the hanginge of the bell - - - - - xs.
Item, for nailles about the bell - - - - - vjd.
Item, to Spenser, for timber for the bell frame, and for plankes for the steple floore, and his worcke, and the bell stocke - - - - - iiijli. xvjs. vjd.

Item, for nailes for the steple floore - xijd.
 Item, for cariage for the bell stocke - vijd.
 and other timber to the chappell - ijs.
 Item, for a bell rope for the great bell

Chamberlrs. acct., 1616 (Shakespeare died, 23rd April, 1616):—

Paid in yearnest for casting the great bell -	ijs.
Paid for wax and rasin that he yoused about the bell -	xviijd.
Paid to Richard Cowell and his men for helping doune with the great bell -	vjs. iiijd.
Paid in charges when the great bell was a-casting -	xviijd.
Paid for waching the mettall when the bell was cast -	xviijd.
Paid for diging the bell out of the groung -	ijs. vjd.
Paid for having up the bell in the bellfree -	liijs.
Paid to Loch for his gabell, two days -	xijd.
Paid for stoking the bell and hanging, and laying the floorse -	vijs. xd.
Paid for a bawdrig, and mending the roope -	vs. iiijd.
Paid to the bellfownder for casting the bell -	vjli. xvjs.
Paid to Thomas Jellfes for a horse, three days -	liijs.
Paid for making too bandes for the bellfownder -	vlijd.
Paid for beare when the bell wase draud up -	vjd.
Paid for mending Mr. Combes' gabell -	ijs. vjd.
Paid for trussing the bell last -	ijs. xd.

One of the many charms of a visit to Stratford-on-Avon is the well-nigh sublime sound of the Curfew Bell of the Holy Guild, which Shakespeare, from his early infancy until the day of his spirit winging its flight to join the "heavenly throng," of which he sung so gloriously, heard

"toll the knell of parting day."

It has been erroneously stated as a revival, whereas the line of curfew observance from the Guild tower is unbroken from the time of William the Conqueror. The custom was well-nigh universal in his time, and there is joy in realizing that many hundreds of England's villages and towns tenaciously cling to a practice which draws their folk away at the prayerful hour of its solemn utterance in these our busy, bustling days to the very infancy of the sleeping world. The modern world may boast of its "Big Ben," whose bellowings announce to Parliament men his mushroom growth of to-day; but Stratford's curfew bell holds exalted lineage of long past

ages, compassing the brightest periods of British story—and through the greater part of the life of the prince of literature daily sounding in his ear has made it a very diadem of its crown of literature.

There are no items of the Chamberlain's accounts that place us closer, as it were, to the daily round of Shakespeare's life than the perusal of the quaint entries connected with the bauldricke, claper, buckelle, stocke gaball, trussinges, floores, and other belongings of this more than venerable freeholder of the Guild Tower. Century after century it has proclaimed each day's wane, and, although the solemn tones were primarily intended as a caution against the danger incidental to wooden houses with fire-inviting straw roofs, yet its every evening "good-night" is an integral part of the day's reckoning. Woe to him who should dare to propose to the peaceful citizens of Stratford any silencing the heavenly voice!

The ailments and through mendings, begotten for restoration to health, the intrudings of high bailiffs and aldermen, covetous



of immortalization by process of getting their names inscribed on his patiently-enduring chest and stomach, as the other items of his history, have been unearthed for us by that Argus-eyed ferret of old parish registers, Richard Savage, secretary and librarian to the Trustees of the Shakespeare possessions,

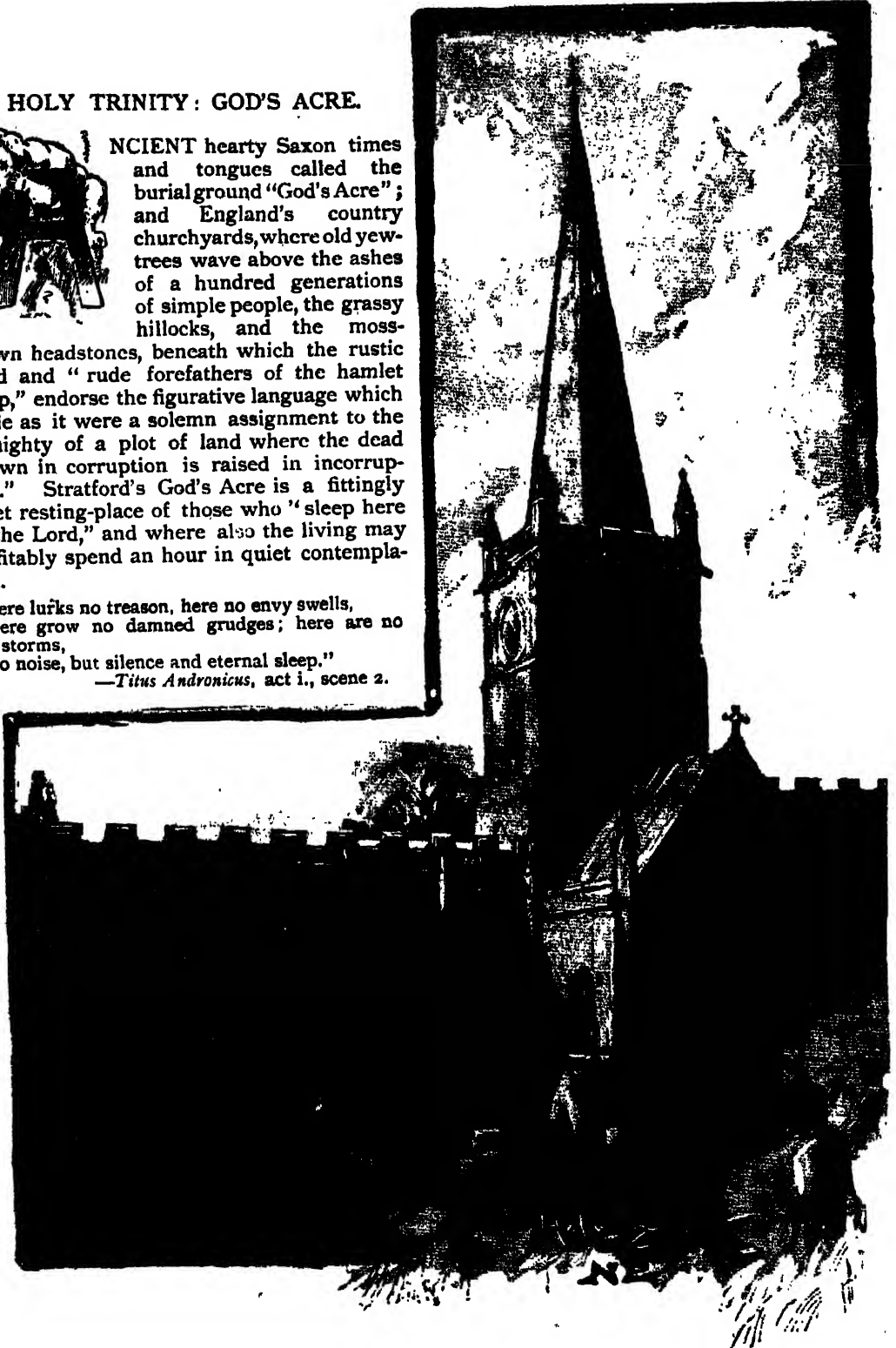
HOLY TRINITY: GOD'S ACRE.



ANCIENT hearty Saxon times and tongues called the burialground "God's Acre"; and England's country churchyards, where old yew-trees wave above the ashes of a hundred generations of simple people, the grassy hillocks, and the moss-grown headstones, beneath which the rustic child and "rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep," endorse the figurative language which made as it were a solemn assignment to the Almighty of a plot of land where the dead "sown in corruption is raised in incorruption." Stratford's God's Acre is a fittingly quiet resting-place of those who "sleep here in the Lord," and where also the living may profitably spend an hour in quiet contemplation.

"Here lurks no treason, here no envy swells,
Here grow no damned grudges; here are no
storms,
No noise, but silence and eternal sleep."

—*Titus Andronicus*, act 1., scene 2.





South
Approach
God's Acre

We know of no churchyard more beautifully kept than is Stratford. All around is indeed in holy repose, waiting till the morning of the great awakening. Blessings on all who have helped this consummation. A love of floral mementoes seems part and parcel of the good people's nature, and to have become synonymous with the great name they rightly boast of. Flowers are scattered hither and thither in profusion; and no matter what the season, Trinity's God's Acre is sure to find plenty of choice blooms to keep alive, if needed, memories of the departed.

The heart must be divested of all feelings of things at once sacred and beautiful that can approach this Church of the Holy Trinity, unmoved by thoughts too deep and too high for expression. Verily, it is "A place for the Lord," a habitation for the mighty "God of Jacob." Here, indeed, is a rare combination of objects and associations to charm, elevate, and solemnize the soul. The eye is first delighted by the picturesque. The north entrance is approached through an avenue under whose proud flagway lie that which no following spring revives, "the ashes of the urn"; whilst overhead interlace, in the Gothic arch of beauty, the entwining branches and lovely green leaves of the graceful lime-trees. On either side "the forefathers of the hamlet sleep." Towards the river the sable-suited rooks and crows build in the tall old trees, and sweep, croaking about on heavy wing, fit tenants of the scene; the nightingale's delightful note at eve is heard; small birds formerly made in the "jutting, frieze," coign of vantage, their pendant bed and procreant cradle. Trees sooth and comfort by their sympathy. We may stand in our sorrows, our yearnings or sadness, but they come to us with ten thousand airy voices or melodious whisperings; and mingling better thoughts and faith with our fretful experience, they sweeten the heart without washing away its thoughts with forgetfulness. But not the music of the grove, the beauty of the flowers, all the features of the landscape, or the solemn temple that stands in grey majesty before the visitor, can impress him with that sentiment of awe and reverence which must arise as he contemplates the fact that here verily lies the "awful dust" of the man whose genius outstripped time and "exhausted worlds."

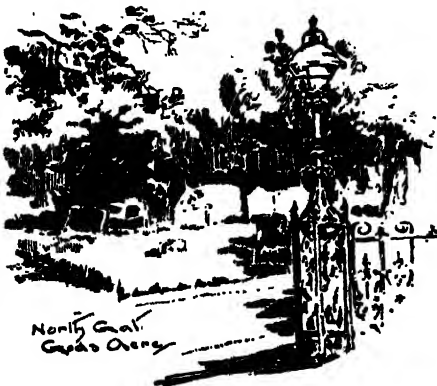
In the lovely churchyard of Stratford the visitor will find flowers decorating the graves at all seasons. Here indeed one feels it matter



Old Stratford
God's Acre Holy Trinity

of gratitude that this finest gift of Providence is the most profusely given. Flowers cannot be monopolised. The poor have them with the rich. It does not require an education to love and appreciate them: and, as they are messengers of affection, tokens of remembrance, and presents of beauty, of universal acceptance, it is pleasant to think that all men recognise a brief brotherhood in them. The poorest child can proffer them to the richest. A hundred persons turned together into a meadow full of flowers would be drawn together in a transient brotherhood. It is affecting to see how serviceable flowers often are to the necessities of the poor. If they bring their little floral gift to you, it cannot but touch the heart to think that their grateful affection longed to express itself as much as our own. The poor can give but little, and do but little. Were it not for flowers they would be shut out from those exquisite pleasures which spring from such gifts. Who can ever take one from a child, or from the poor, without thanking God in their behalf for flowers?

There remain but few tombstone records of men who trod Holy Trinity's God's Acre with our great poet, and worshipped with him in the glorious temple it surrounds. We give sketches of all to be found. One is led, however, to the belief that Stratford is a most poetical place, at least, so far as the tombstones are evidence of the public taste: the majority have a headstone, and generally with some half-dozen lines of hard-earned rhyme. Many of Pope's epitaphs are to be found, but clipped and chopped about a good deal, so as to suit person and purpose. The poorest seem to scorn resting in peace without some poetry above his head, on the principle, probably, of "Placantur



carmina manes"; the original import having been some time expended, many have copied, picked, and plagiarized from their death-reposing neighbours. The good words in behalf of the fellow-parishioners of his very day and hour have mostly crumbled away, and we must be content with such as on many pilgrimages we have found of nearest approximate date. Some of these latter have now become so ingrown with moss that it is almost impossible to decipher the inscriptions; however, we succeeded in transcribing some of the quaint epitaphs which exist here as memorials of the dead of Stratford. Here is that of "Thomas Mills." What a good man he must have been to deserve such a testimonial! Or are epitaphs as unreliable on the humble gravestones of Stratford Churchyard, as they are upon more pretentious sculptured monuments?—



Good Acre

Here lyeth the body of Mr. Thomas Mills, who departed this life the fourth day of October, A.D. 1694, in the 77th year of his age.

To speake his praises every one
Would require a spacious stone—
Those can the best encomiums give
Who best did know how he did live;
And he that says ye least he can,
Will say, Here lieth an honest man.

Near this was the grave of Elizabeth Morris, on whose headstone is the following:—

Here lyeth the body of Elizabeth, the wife of John Morris, of Shottery, who departed this life June ye 8th, Anno Dom. 1700. Aged 57.

Behold, All Yow that Pas me By,
As You are now so once was I;
And as I
Therefore

Upon a flagstone lying on the walk was this:—

Here lyeth the body of Anne, formerly the wife of Robert Wotten, Barber Chirurgion, but afterward married to Christopher Dale, Yeoman, who erected this stone to her memory. She died May ye 22, 1726, in the 80th year of her age.

Good Christopher Dale evidently intended it to be distinctly understood that it was the "yeoman" and not the "barber chirurgion" who was so mindful of the memory of Mistress Anne.

The next quaint epitaph was upon an old headstone, crumbling rapidly to decay:—

Heare Lieth the
Body of Mary Hands,
Widow, who Departd.
this Life Aprill ye
—th, Anno Domony
1699, aged
87 years.

Heare Lieth the
Body of Abigail,
the wife of George
Hands, Sener, who
departed this Life
May ye 30, Ann. Dom.
1699, aged 37 years.

Death creeps Aabout on hard,
And Steals Abroad on seen;
Hur darts are Suding and her arous keen.
Her Stroks are deadly, come they soon or late—
When, being Strock Repentance is to late;
Death is a minute full of Suden sorrow,
Then live to-day as thou mayest dy tomarruo.

Nothing can be more natural to bereaved Christians than to feel a veneration for the ground in which, until the Great Day shall be, we "look on men as autumn leaves," and "scarce believe we still survive." This God's Acre of Stratford is truly one of those sequestered spots where "the silent shade, the calm retreat," invite to the contemplation of death and eternity. There is conviction that all have sacred rights in such hallowed ground, and hopeful anticipations that our own bodies may be permitted to slumber in some such. It is here we joyfully realize that that which we have committed in its mortal part to the earth, God will guard with



Old Grave Near Good Acre
Holy Grinly



sacred vigilance till the time comes. The trees rustling their leaves are prophesying to our ears of the trees of life, and all the birds and flowers are witnesses of God's guardianship. "Shall not He who cares for us care for you and yours which were and are His own?" they say. "Yea, truly," the heart responds, "God hath them. No black wolf of death shall break into that fold. He shall keep them for his coming."

A becoming sense of humility seems to have animated most of the families and friends of the generations who since the great author's time have quietly laid their loved ones here in humble company until the Great Awakening. It has evidently been felt as sufficient to lie in peace in the spot hallowed of Shakespeare, without any weak

Oakes Hunt, for instance, who so worthily filled for over forty years the office of Town Clerk; what offence was he ever guilty of to bring upon him the terrible sentence of being surrounded in death with an alarming iron railing stockade, keeping his brother Christians at such a distance? There are no body-snatchers in Stratford covetous of his bones. William Hunt was a good, kindly, and well-loved man, and never desired to monopolize a space of two hundred feet to himself. He succeeded in regular sequence generations of his family, who held the office with high repute, and who, if permitted to take a peep at to-day's Stratford, would see pleausurably the dignity transmitted to one of their own ilk, a worthy occupant, and who will unquestionably cause an early removal



erection of broken columns, Pompey pillars, or Cleopatra needles to record the fact. Very few have ventured purgatorially to imprison departed relatives within iron-bar railings; there are a few exceptions. These, however, will vanish with time and the judicious gentle handling of Vicar Arbuthnot. William

of the iron fortification from its present huge share of God's Acre. Would not the spirit of the great poet resent such territorial annexation? We can imagine William very restless in his iron-bound enclosure; with thousands of visitors now regretting Hunt's undeserved imprisonment, he cannot fail in prayerful



hope of restoration to freedom. The family of Hobbs, who, with friend Hunt, obstruct the exterior of the south end of the outer chancel, will follow a right example, and rejoice in the opportunity of himself and defunct relatives being given stretch of limb and sunshine by removal of their

unseemly iron obstructions.

Stratford Churchyard impresses an idea that it is more up to the mark of inspiration of Gray's "Elegy" than even that of Stoke Pogis. Certain it is that every line of the suggestive serious thought and eminently elevating character of that perfect composition is presented to the mind here on Avon's bank. How tenderly does it appeal alike to the boyish fancy and the maturer judgment! As poetry, it is marked with no exuberance of fancy or richness of imagery. It is simple, like the every day occurrences it describes; but these simple words are most admirably adapted to the sense, and the measure to the subject. Sitting on the benches so thoughtfull, provided in the churchyard beside the sweet flowing river, near the chancel where rests England's poet, there spreads out a large expansive lea; the curfew bell of the neighbouring Guild Church summoning to evening prayers. The grand opening lines repeat themselves:

The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,

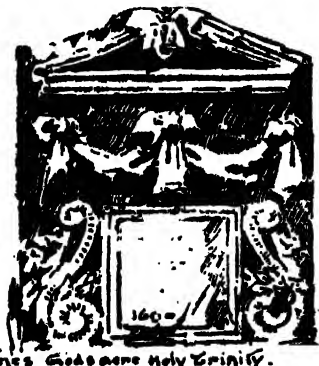
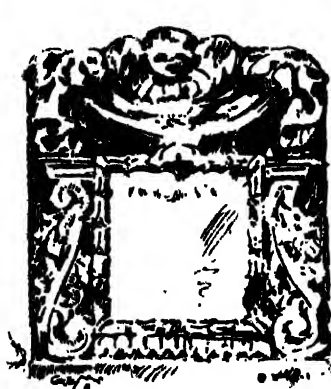
The lowing herd winds slowly o'er the lea,

The ploughman homeward plods his weary way,

And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

What a perfect picture! A few masterly touches in bold outline and imagination instinctively fill up the minor details. The time and scene are presented to us in the opening lines, followed by a few details of cottage life; and with the mind impressed by the imaginary picture, we are wafted off to the regions of speculation, while we seem to follow the bent of our own thoughts.

The stately elms of Holy Trinity afford home and shelter to a vast family of rooks, who date longer back into the past than any Warwickshire history records. The Holy Trinity rooks, we would feign believe, are of a good deal more aristocratic order and dignified bearing than the ordinary *Corvus frugilegus*. They carry themselves with more solemnity of manner, their plumage is blacker, and clearly more glossy than rooks elsewhere. Their duties of sentry charge are no imagined responsibilities, they know well the whole Shakespeare country, and every field in it, better than any man who may have hunted it during a long life, embracing the period of early youth to the greyest hairs possessed of pluck in the chase. Theirs has been faithful watch and ward duty from the solemn day of the great one's earthly remains being deposited in Trinity's honoured chancel. Save at very exceptional seasons, occasions of nidification, they refrain from the usual excessive babel clatter of their tribe, and rarely on Sabbath days during service time have been known to break into unseemly discourse. It has for generations past been a common remark, "quiet as a Trinity rook on Sundays." Verily the Holy Trinity rooks magnify their office! Every dweller in these elms around the fane is an early riser, he toils hard for his daily food, he loves his home, he delights in order and



Old Tomb Stones. Gods name Holy Trinity.

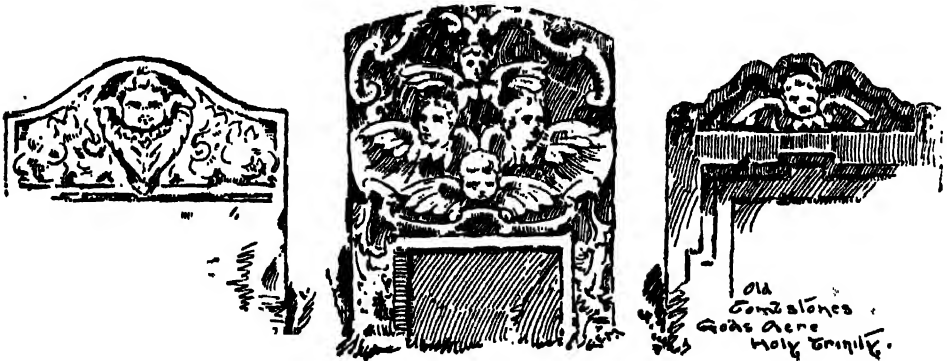
regularity, he punishes theft, and, though a kind and active neighbour, has none of the prying objectionable propensities of the jackdaw, who under solemn and clear understanding is only tolerated as co-dweller in the proportion of about one in fifty. Never have they been known to exceed this.

Jack is the silliest of the bird tribe in the matter of domestic architecture, and a worse constructive builder. If a hollow in a pollard stump cannot be found suited to his fancies close to the God's Acre, the paired ones will be content with wisps of straw laid upon rudely intertwined sticks, and if permitted to exist until the incubation time, they will confide the eggs to this rickety structure. Occasionally an aspiring pair on nidification intent, will carry their rough materials to the top of the highest elm; so also in early spring Jack will stick himself on the spire vane, remaining for more than half-an-hour at a stretch, performing all sorts of gyrations and indulging in what the unlearned in bird talk would regard as abusive and vituperative language, but which can hardly be of this character, as the rooks are invariably mute during the performance. The pride of home intent on loftier position soon meets its fall

in the first heavy wind, carrying the undaubed pretence of structure far away amid the scoffs and jeers of the more skilled rooks, who have been quiet observers of the whole process of mock building, in order to enjoy



and chuckle over the downfall. It sometimes occurs that a pair of daws will have the impudence to possess themselves of a rook's nest, acquired through a whole week's watching and persevering occupancy during the skilled associates' gathering of nest materials; and instances have been noticed of entire triumphs in heartless dispossession, even to the holding on until hatching out and



rearing the unrighteously homed brood, until able to fly away and shift for themselves. Oddly enough, there is no "Defence Committee." Jack is permitted these house estate robberies with impunity, infrequency of the worse than lawlessness securing its toleration.

A few crows occasionally offer themselves as associates in the watch and ward army, but have never succeeded in obtaining permanent enrolment. In flocks the Trinity rook builds its home, in flocks it seeks its food, and in flocks it returns at eve to its spire-crowned eyrie. Could Shakespeare have known the sacred duties to be performed by the rooks as guardians of his shrine,



he would hardly have cared, and still less have applied the title "bully rook" in "Merry Wives of Windsor," act i., scene 3, although the term "bully" by no means meant what is usually its interpretation, a cheat and a sharper; the words "bully rook" in Shakespeare's time bore much the same signification as "jolly dog" does nowadays. At the poet's death the Stratford rooks abjured their former ways of jollity and took to a life of solemnity and devotion accordant with their avocation as watchers

over and guardians of his resting-place. There is no mistake as to the religious observances of the Holy Trinity rooks, they are no mere formal worshippers, but true church-goers, observing daily Matins and Evensong, and so proffer a lesson to the many who hear with indifference the holy sound of the bell summoning for morn and eve presence in God's House. It is a common remark with Stratford children when watching the wheeling and diving of the great body of watchers at eventide, and listening to the last dying-out subdued cawing just before the death-like silence preparatory to settling down to roost—"The rooks are saying their prayers." Let no man treat lightly the guileless expression of such simple children, borne out as it is by the holy declaration, "He feedeth the ravens who call upon Him." There is a strong *esprit de corps* among all ranks of the Holy Trinity guardian army, they come to the rescue of each other in danger, delight in each other's society, and are strongly conservative in the general interests. They have been known to expel from the community over-garrulous members, possibly promulgators of new-fangled schismatic doctrines, anti-Shakespearean; against these, vengeance is swift. Such is the naturalist's reading of rarely-occurring tumultuous uprisings of the whole body corporate, followed by determined vigorous outdriving at bayonet point some half-dozen noisy praters; these are, under strong escort, hurried out of the Shakespeare country, doubtless well warned never again to present themselves among the Trinity community of Stratford.

Many a salutary teaching may be derived from watching the Shakespeare body-guard. Just before sunrise they may be seen rising into the air like a cloud, closely followed by a continual wheeling round and round in most wonderful tumbling and darting evolutions. Shortly after these grand manœuvres they break off into numerous divisions, each taking its course in opposite directions. After flying steadily awhile in their several routes with advance and rearguard, each sub-division is seen, after due word of command, to take post in some large field, whence again rising after a while they resume the evolutions in the air, apparently corresponding with those carried out by the main body shortly after daybreak. Having gone through these they sub-divide into brigades, each taking its own separate way over the Shakespeare country in pursuit of maintenance; this

military brigading is repeated at eventide, prior to returning home to rest, settling down in their lofty tree-top homes, and entering on restful guardianship. Holy Trinity rooks regard Vicar Arbuthnot's home as under their charge, making it an outpost, with which there is established communication. It is in no way strange that Oliver Goldsmith should have observed that he loved to study the polity of rooks! Trinity rooks suffer trials through destruction of their nests in autumnal and winter gales. In windy seasons three-fourths are blown out of the trees, and great is the lamentation over the additional labours thus thrown on March first days when nest-building is in full vigour. It is remarkable that despite the numerous hatchings out, and the blessed fact that no wicked fowler is permitted to

panying sketch, will readily distinguish between the rook and crow. At the base of the bill of the rook there is a light grey skin which, in the young birds, is covered with hairs, but naked in the old. By this greyish skin the rook is at once known from the crow or jackdaw; the latter, however, is a much smaller bird. A full-grown Holy Trinity rook in his full rich plumage of glossy black, of bluish reflection, is a noble bird, measuring nineteen inches in length and thirty-eight inches across the wings. Such as these compose Holy Trinity bodyguard.

It has been matter of general surprise that the burial spots of Shakespeare's descendants in Holy Trinity God's Acre are not known, seeing the numerous generations of them who have passed away. We must remember that even headstones cost money, so also thei-



approach the holy precincts, little increase has been known during many years in the occupants of Shakespeare's elms, this though no disciples of Malthus. At certain seasons gentleman rook is a master, of deportment, when in society of his charmer. Watch his gliding and curtsying before the lady-love in whose sight at spring-tide he by aid of gentle dalliance covets favour. His winsome glidings and bendings of body, the puffing out of feathers, the making a fan of his tail, an Adonis-like curvating of the neck, are worthy of any posture master, approaching a graceful minuet, and far in advance of the pigeons dwelling in large numbers at the adjoining mill. Bully Rook's attentions are not fitful, the adoration being continued through the whole period of maternity. The reader, from the accom-

panying sketch, will readily distinguish between the rook and crow. At the base of the bill of the rook there is a light grey skin which, in the young birds, is covered with hairs, but naked in the old. By this greyish skin the rook is at once known from the crow or jackdaw; the latter, however, is a much smaller bird. A full-grown Holy Trinity rook in his full rich plumage of glossy black, of bluish reflection, is a noble bird, measuring nineteen inches in length and thirty-eight inches across the wings. Such as these compose Holy Trinity bodyguard.

It has been matter of general surprise that the burial spots of Shakespeare's descendants in Holy Trinity God's Acre are not known, seeing the numerous generations of them who have passed away. We must remember that even headstones cost money, so also thei-

specially assigned to the generations of the Shakespeare family, to the writer's firm belief they are all gathered together in one spot on the north-east side of the churchyard, near the river bank, about twenty yards from the north-east end of the chancel, where is readily to be found a headstone with this inscription for Thomas Hart and Alice, his wife :—

"In Memory of Thos. Hart who was the fifth descendant in a direct line from Joan, eldest daughter of John Shakespeare, and Sister to the Immortal William Shakespeare. He died May 23rd, 1793, aged 64. Also Alice his wife, who died June 20th, 1792, aged 60."

This headstone is almost in direct line with the Hart tablet built against the wall on the outside of the north aisle of the church on the west side of its eastern buttress. This tablet, now scarcely to be deciphered, bore the following :—

"Under this place lieth the body of George Hart and Esther his wife.

She dyed ye 27 day of April, 1696, aged 62. And he dyed ye 29 day of April, 1702, aged 66."

On a gravestone directly under the above was the following inscription to a son of the above George and Esther Hart :—

"In Memory of George Hart, who died August 27th, 1745, aged 69."

This gravestone has disappeared.

There now exists a grass-grown space to the north-east of the Thomas and Alice Hart headstone which the good, unobtrusive folk of Stratford have never invaded, dreading with religious awe any exhumation of Shakespeare family bones. This, together with the ground intervening on the side between it and the north aisle tablet of George and Esther Hart, is believed by the writer to have been Shakespearean territory, and it is only by a very few assuming intrusive invaders that other occupancy has occurred. One by one the Shakespeares and their descendants have yielded to the sickle and been borne to the quarters tacitly assigned as specially their resting home. Probably the remains of the poet's father and mother rest close here-

abouts, and from their day downwards there has been continuance of their burials here. We believe they all nestle around this spot, such of the race as yielded up their breath in the place of their birth, doubtless with duly-erected records of entrance and exit, the which have vanished through time and the usual graveyard spiring away for highway repair and maintenance. Vicars did not too closely inquire as to the dispossession of occupants; indeed, the clamour for admission to what was often in cynical language termed a last home, necessitously required displacement of precious occupants, though in this respect, having a gloomy God's Acre, there was less quarrying among the remains of those who had themselves dug down earlier in the day than in many other churchyards. If Rural Deans existed in those long-ago periods, the office was then as now often one more in titled name than of usefulness eagerly sought by the lesser humble-minded of God's ministers.



Gods Acre
Stratford
N.E.



HOLY TRINITY.



HOLY TRINITY, the parish church of Stratford, is unique in its situation, surrounded as it is with great elm-trees, the river Avon flowing so near, and within sound of the adjoining mill weir. A few of these venerable trees have become somewhat trun-

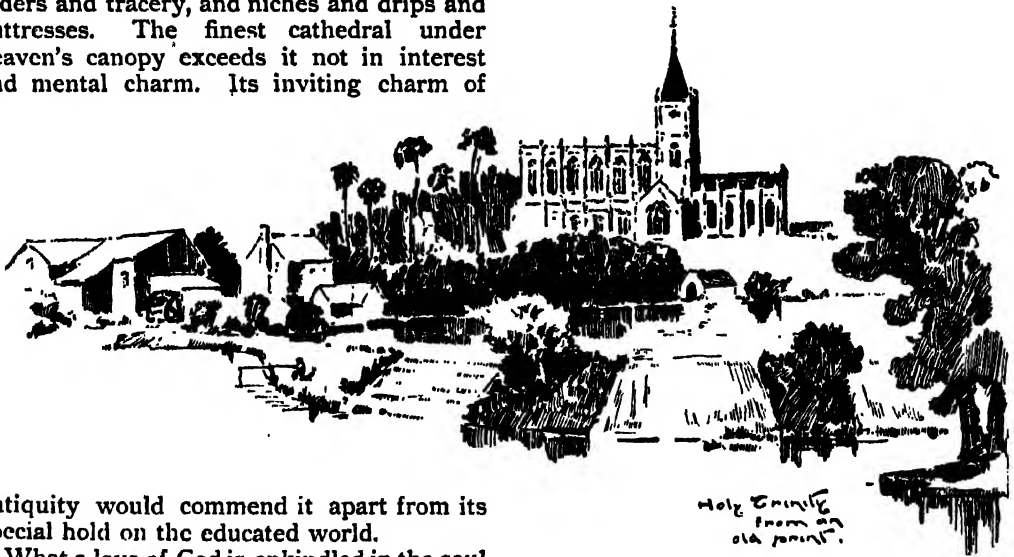
cated at top, and cavernously hollow through the inroads of decay. Stoutly, however, their main body stand proudly erect; the tender in youth, the sturdy in prime, and the green in old age. It is pleasant to think of the great bard resting here side by side with his wife, and his favourite daughter and her husband. We can never be sad in contemplating their graves. His was a lot which anyone might envy—to be laid with those in death whom they loved dearest in life.

The approach to the great shrine of the

Holy Trinity is all in unison with the feelings of devotion and awe possessing one's soul, as borne on to the hallowed edifice, doubly sanctified as the sacred depository of all that was earthly in the great limner. The road from which you first get sight of the tall and exquisite spire cutting the sky, and, like "silent finger," pointing to heaven, grows gracefully out from among great elm trees, with the rooks cawing in their town of homes, built conscious of entire safety among the sacred branches, is a wide road with gentle curves, and well cared for. Reverent hearts and zealous hands have done well in keeping all the surroundings wide and in good taste. No drawn-out description of the exterior appearance of the church is needed. It is one of the finest of temples. The visitor needs no confused account of orders and tracery, and niches and drips and buttresses. The finest cathedral under heaven's canopy exceeds it not in interest and mental charm. Its inviting charm of

holy place in which he oft besought his Heavenly Father's help and aid, and under whose shadow he at length laid him down to rest. Here it was that he worshipped as a boy and youth, and here, after acquaintance with the attractions and follies of the metropolis, great even in his day, he offered the outpourings of a grateful heart for a happy return, with independence honestly earned, to his native town, in which he took a place apart from the castes that try to overtake each other in the high road of life.

The grandly venerable pile stands close to the Avon, at the south-east extremity of the town; and between the church and the river is a fine terrace, edged with large elms, whose boughs immediately overhang the stream as it flows placidly along.



antiquity would commend it apart from its special hold on the educated world.

What a love of God is enkindled in the soul from all around, attended with feelings of joy and admiration that stream up towards the heavens above in grateful thanksgiving! The grand old Prayer House discloses itself bit by bit, though with all the poetical strength and sweetness such as the most zealous devotees of the immortal bard can desire. Here we feel in presence of the holy temple in which he was "received into the congregation of Christ's flock, and signed with the sign of the cross, in token that hereafter he should not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, and manfully to fight under His banner against sin, the world, and the devil, and to continue Christ's faithful soldier and servant unto his life's end." Yes, here we stand in the very

This outside world of architecture in the surroundings almost rivals the beautiful temple itself. It is the architecture of the majestic worshippers that stand with folded hands, high up in the blue sky above in different directions. These wear the angles and arches of their own grand Gothic order and the imperial belt of centuries. In the spring and summer-time may be heard services continuously going on in this out-of-door Cathedral of Nature. The dew-moistened, foliated arches, so lofty, so interwebbed with wavy, restless spangles of sky, are all set to the music of the heavenly anthem. These noble trees, each contributing to matchless majesty—holding sentry-ward, nowhere crowding on the



scene, but at distances seemingly calculated and arranged by the most refined of all arborists to yield greatest solemn grandeur; allowing the venerable tower supporting the spire to get glimpses of the river in summer-time—how they hang in the most verdant and luxurious masses of foliage! What a soft, hazy twilight floats about them! What a slumberous calm rests upon them! It is more than sleep—it is profound repose! It is the depth of a contemplative trance, as if every tree were a living thinking spirit, lost in the vastness of some absorbing thought, the hush of a dream-land bearing the spell of an infrangible silence. Here, if anywhere, the world is cast out of the heart, giving place to delicious tranquillity. The “street musicians of the heavenly city” may be heard singing its happiest hymns out of their mellow throats. The lofty orchestra is full of them. Their treble shakes the leaves with its breath, as it filters down and floods the temple below. Beautiful is this building of God! Beautiful and blessed are these morning singing birds of his praise!

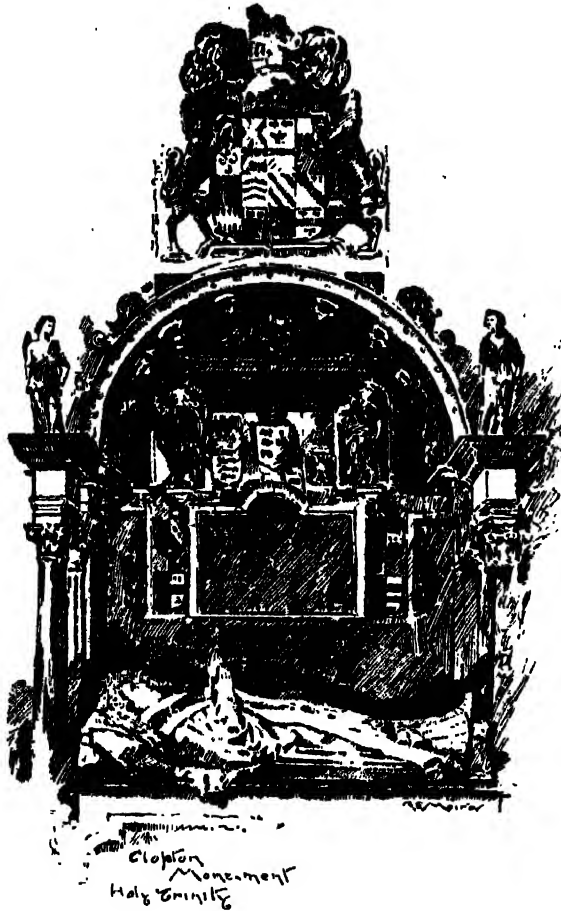
No calmer or more congenial spot could

be desired by a poet as his last resting-place; and amid such surroundings our great dramatist reposes in the chancel, close to the river, where, if any sounds reach the dead, he might hear the noise of its weir.

A church at Stratford is mentioned in “Doomsday Book”; and Dugdale, in his “Antiquities of Warwickshire,” says that it “is a very ancient structure; little less than the Conqueror’s time as I guess by the fabrick of the steeple.” He records the erection of the south aisle of the nave with a chantry-chapel at its eastern end by John of Stratford, Archbishop of Canterbury, about the tenth of Edward III., and of the “north and south cross” or transept by the executors of Hugh Clopton, in the reign of Henry VII. In 1358 this edifice was devoted to the rites and ceremonies of a college of priests and singing-boys, who were then settled in an adjoining building, by Ralph of Stratford, Bishop of London. This college enjoyed many privileges by royal charters, and its Principal was styled “Dean of the Collegiate Church, Holy Trinity.” The architectural character of the interior of the church is displayed in two compartments, situate on the north side of the present choir. This shows two arches, with panelling above, and three of the twelve windows on each side, which are continued



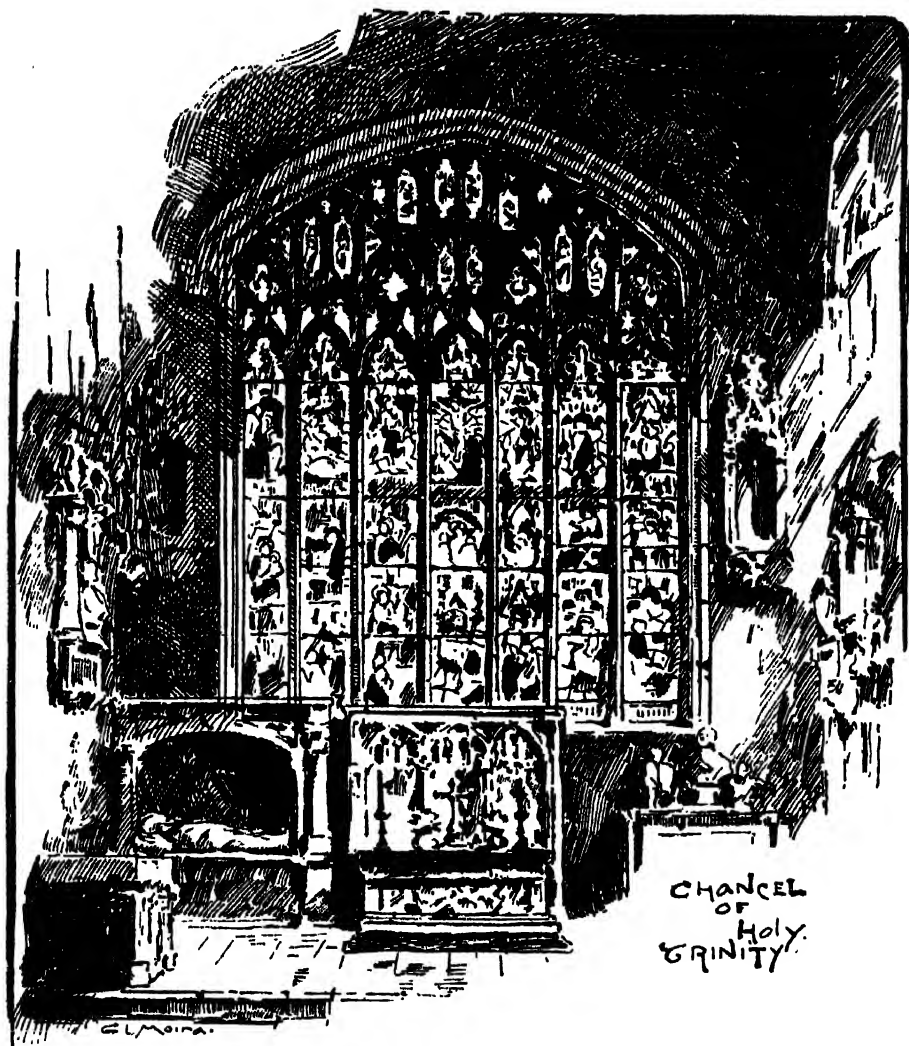
through the whole clerestory of the building ; also one arch, with an octagonal column on the opposite side, and two screens opening into the north aisle. One of these is part of the canopy to an altar-tomb for Sir Hugh Clopton (as supposed, for all inscriptions are gone), who was Lord Mayor of London, 1492. There are monuments in the same chapel to other branches of the Clopton family, one of



which commemorates an Earl of Totnes and his Countess. At Shakespeare's death, 1616, we may reasonably conclude that both the interior and exterior of the chancel probably varied but very little then from its original state of architectural perfection and beauty. It had not been finished much more than one hundred years ; and it may be inferred that all the walls, buttresses, parapets and pinnacles of the exterior, with the floor, stalls, windows, doors, carved screen, and *timber roof* of the interior, were nearly as sound and good as when left by their makers.

This House of God, grey with years, perfect in beauty, is heart and soul a glory of our storied England. That it had a timber roof is not only traditionally reported, but Mr. Wheler, a local historian of Stratford, had a corbel-angel, which belonged to and supported one end of the principal beam. The mural bracket capitals, still remaining, are other evidences that the architect designed such a roof ; and we know that the choir of Stratford Church, and the ceilings of many churches of nearly coeval date, were thus finished.

The Shakespeare shrine has little to offend in its mural adornments. There are fewer sprinklings of weeping willows, smoking torches, and tea urns, the usual illustrations of surviving affection and departed worth. Its interior displays only one monument of any ferocious defunct, with tablet surmounted with a ten-pounder, a tattered banner, and a battered helmet, usually the principal curiosities of an English church of time-honoured date. If any warrior kinned have dwelt in Stratford, they have refrained, in becoming humility, from vaunting the descent in the Pantheon of local history, presuming, probably, that none had a right of parade and laudation in the presence-chamber of the world's greatest dust. A first feeling on settling to the reality that this is the great shrine is one of thankfulness that a founder should have gone before to prepare such a suitable resting-place for the unborn earthly remains of so mighty a spirit, thereafter to be laid in so fitting a temple of liberality and taste of a bygone age as the individual author, founder, and finisher of Holy Trinity. He has received his reward. Independent of architectural proportions and perfections, there is ever something about an ecclesiastical building to excite interest and awaken reflection, which, in "far resistless musings," carries us back to bygone history and habits. The hundreds of years that have rolled over spire and pinnacle, battlement and buttress, each leaving, in blunted angle and the rounded sculpture, some traces behind, are all locked in shadowy array, and, as it were, required to "render up their dead" ; the generations that have worshipped within its walls in all the gradations and variety of habit, manners, customs and dress ; the scenes we fancy they must have witnessed as we gaze on each corbel head ; the obdurate, impassioned de-



positories of secrets we would fain know or force from their possession—all these attach with intensified force to such a pile as Stratford's Holy Trinity: interest heightened by all that can contribute to special sanctification, making every surrounding a source of grandeur. "Give me worship and quietness"—"Henry VI.," part 3, act iv, sc. 3—is entirely and literally realized.

The dark pall and the funeral procession of many of the good and kind who died as they lived, in their own parish and among their own neighbours, has continued not less frequent within its precincts. It is just the church where one can realize that for hundreds of years successive generations, baptized, married, and blessed in holy communion under its hallowed roof, now calmly

sleep within its cavernous vaults and about its buttresses.

Happily, the spirit of modern "restoration" has not held sway over the glorious old fane. This is ascribable to the fact of jurisdiction over it and the churchyard being more than ordinarily complicated.

The Sackville West family are the patrons of the vicarage, the Corporation of Stratford are various lay rectors, with an interest in and liability for the chancel; the body of the churchyard is under the control of one power, and there exists a right-of-way path which intersects it between the North and South Gates under that of another. Before anything could be determined, the overlapping potentates had to agree, hence, possibly, the avoidance so far of



what may have resulted in Vandalism, through the difficulty of reconciling the varying views of the ecclesiastical and municipal authorities jointly interested in the structure. Let no man condemn division of responsibility with such an instance as Shakespeare's Holy Temple affords. It is greatly to be hoped that neither in the present time nor at any future, will the town of Stratford forget that itself is pledged to an almost superstitious scrupulousness, that nothing be allowed to estrange the church as it shall be from the church identified with him. Shakespeare and Stratford Church are as

one. There are limits to the conservatism which anxiety not to disturb the links with a mighty memory imposes on the owners of the material structures consecrated by contact with him, and any break in the general identity of the past and present of the church honoured as Shakespeare's sepulchre, would be an outrage, by a town indebted to him as Stratford-on-Avon, which no common plea of architectural perfection could excuse. Shakespeare's memory, the population of Stratford, and the innumerable multitude of his admirers are inextricably united in respect of the sites his name and bygone presence have glorified. They cannot separate themselves from one another, or sever their titles to the joint property which they must hold undivided and indivisible. In all the future, Stratford in restoring its church has ever to bear in mind that it would be a hideous breach of faith in Shakespeare's townsmen to stir one inch beyond the reforms the fabric and its intrinsic beauty demands. In laying down this injunction, some allowance may fairly be made for those of his devotees, myriads who do not live in Stratford, and who begin with some prejudice when asked to judge of restorations of its noble church. To them the church, as everything else in the town, is first and foremost, an appendage to the biography of Shakespeare. Their immediate interest is that nothing should be changed. The church in the poet's own age was less beautiful than it had been before the Reformation stripped it of statues and shrines. Votaries of the memory of Shakespeare would prefer not to have its ancient charms revived at the cost of producing a building he would scarcely have recognised. Since his time, churchwardens and unartistic vicars have added ungraceful features, such as ugly galleries and fittings which should unquestionably be abolished. Though they have no relation to him, and his eyes never looked upon them, visitors to his house have been accustomed to connect them with him, and would rather even that such things were not improved away. Strangers to a locality who claim to be no strangers to the fame of a renowned inhabitant, are disposed to resent any alteration in its environments of their hero worship. To them, all are simply accidents which owe their being to him. The whole, according to their mood, ought to remain intact and stereotyped. This one wish is not to be distracted by modern transformations from

their serious business of realizing a single career and character. Naturally, the residents regard matters from a different standpoint. The people of Stratford possess a double treasure in their inheritance of Shakespeare's birthplace and tomb, and in the more than loveliness of the church which contains his bones. They very properly seek to turn each to the best account, and each to them has an independent value. They trust to the poet's name as a means of gathering resources for the preservation and adornment of their church. Their aim is altogether legitimate. Stratford Church is indeed, over and above all other structures of praise, a stately edifice, and must never be allowed to suffer decay. The good people of Stratford can never, so long as the world exists, sue *in forma pauperis*. They blessedly grant leave to the Anglo-Saxon heirs of Shakespeare's celebrity of teaching all over the world, wherever they may chance to live, to testify pecuniarily to their share in the immortal's place of sepulture which they are conscious they possess and have the utmost pride in possessing. We will hope that the present and future generations will contribute liberally towards the maintenance of a fabric and its surroundings in which the whole world may be said to have a common holding. Were the least hurt inflicted on the associations of Shakespeare with Stratford, the Anglo-Saxon world would ring with denunciations of the crime. In the existing divided control of the sacred building and its surroundings there is double safeguard for the town, the outside world, and the probable varying taste of advancing periods of time. As a rule in England, the Vicar holds undisputed sway over his church and churchyard. Stratford, though blessed above most old temples with a successive race of godly vicars, who have done their wisest and best with the small income at their disposal for the purpose of preservation of the hallowed fabric, has yet had a few not gifted with absolute wisdom in allowing churchwardens sway beyond their individual power of educated discrimination. It would be difficult to find a parish more thoroughly or more conscientiously worked than Stratford-on-Avon by its present Vicar, George Arbuthnot. Singleness of heart, earnest devotion to the care of the souls committed to his charge, fervid pulpit eloquence power, united to earnest desire that everything in the way of Trinity maintenance may be done with an eye to

becoming sacredness of the building and the world-wide holding attaching to it, render all safe in his hands. Other trustees will recognise the grave responsibility involved, and acquit themselves with satisfaction to the world, whose eye will ever be on them.

The church of Holy Trinity itself is in every feature stately and surpassingly beautiful; for extent and grandeur of effect it is quite cathedral-like, especially when seen by night, the moon lighting up the yellow-grey tower, etching its great black shadow on the churchyard, and breaking in soft silver lights upon the



South
side
of CHANCEL

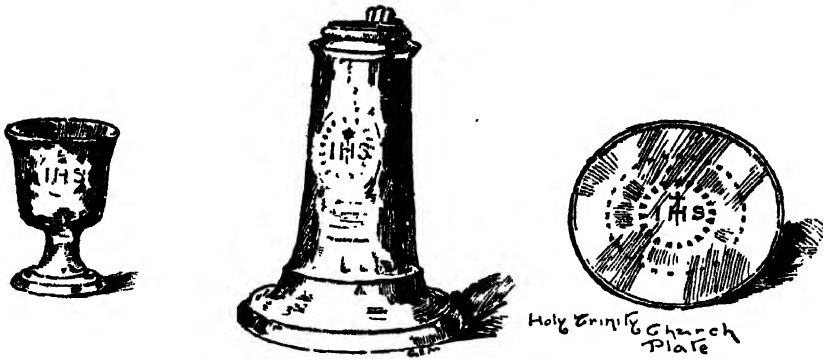
SHAKESPEARE'S TRUE LIFE.

clerestory windows. At such hour the green graves and white and brown headstones the varying changes of which through a life of centuries they have proved silent though not less eloquent witnesses. Exquisitely charming



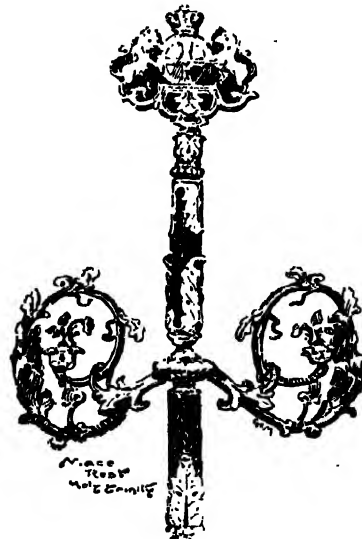
Church itself being almost intercepted by the branching head of old "Heavy Top," as Warwickshire folk designate such trees as have become partially pollard. Green and cheerful even these veterans stand, despite all

must that chancel have been where Shakespeare lies, when the windows were glazed with the forms of saints and angels, and the old oak roof hung down with its pendant figures and carved statues. But all this



sinks into utter insignificance when compared with the one fact that this is the House of God in which he devoutly knelt and prayed, and where he confessed the heavy burden and the mystery of the world. Here in this very temple he learned the two truths taught and enforced by his Saviour—love of God and love of man. Worshipping within these sacred walls, he recognised that there are countless folds for the flock of the Good Shepherd, but no gates, no fences, no bars, to shut out those who may have wandered from the path; that out of the mystery of the One Great Death came the promise of infinite life; and that life, permanent though changeable, is still more solemn than the seeming interruptions of its course we associate with the coffin and the tomb. Such is the simple theology pervading his writings. He troubled not his great brain with the miserable dogmas and intolerance of sects and parties. He dared not throw down the forgiveness of the merciful One, who put on our human form with every nerve and sinew, every sensibility, frailty and weakness, and wore it in poverty-stricken babyhood first cradled in a manger; that for ever and ever when He went back to His high heaven, He might feel and know our least weaknesses, wants, pains, and joys, and remember our temptations and trials as children. He wore it through the ardent years of impulsive, eager, hopeful, ambitious boyhood, that He might know and remember the temptations and trials of youth. He wore it in the thickest cares, anxieties, sorrows, and afflictions of middle manhood, that He might know how to take hold of our nature. God with us suffering, our Healer and Saviour. No wonder that when standing on such hallowed spots the

mind refuses to dwell on anything that is not connected with Shakespeare. The one idea pervades the place, the whole pile seems but his mausoleum. The feelings, no longer checked and thwarted by doubt, here indulge in the most perfect confidence, that, though other traces of him may seem dubious, here, at least, is palpable evidence and absolute certainty. Treading the sounding pavement, there is something intensely



thrilling in the idea, that in very truth the remains of Shakespeare lie mouldering at our feet.

Who will dare question the tradition of Shakespeare's deeply religious cast of thought towards the end of his life? We

may surely better accept this than the vile fabrications hitherto unhesitatingly swallowed. Good traditions ever contain some germ of truth; the reason being that human nature is too prone to invent not good, but evil report. And through all Shakespeare's

Shall worms, inheritors of this excess,

Eat up thy charge? Is this thy body's end?

Then, soul, live thou upon thy servant's loss,

And let that pine to aggravate thy store;

Buy terms divine in selling hours of dross;

Within be fed, without be rich no more:

So shalt thou feed on death, that feeds on men,

And, death once dead, there's no more dying then.

—Sonnet 146.

What a love of God is enkindled in the soul by all around, attended with feelings of joy and admiration that stream up to the heavens above in grateful thanksgiving!

Here, indeed, one loses thought for all that may be going on in the many-coloured world outside. For the time at least it is felt that nowhere else, save here, can such hallowing influences fall upon the heart.

There have been loving and liberal hands protective of its immediate closing in. It is well that Avon Bank, the home of Charles Flower, a true Shakespearean, always foremost to promote improvement having Shakespeare's memory as the object, should allow no owner of an inch between it and Trinity's God's Acre. He will tenderly keep protective ward and watch while living, and, in all probability, when summoned away, will cause yet unborn generations affectionately to cherish his name as the guardian who protected and prevented desecration by building on the lovely spot fallen to his lot so close to the hallowed dust. May Avon Bank long remain a beautiful garden adjoining the sacred fane, adding, as now, to the

loveliness of the scene!

Reader, you must go up to this house of God through the avenue of blossoming lime-trees leading to the northern entrance, traversing the churchyard thickly sown with graves. Peace to the ashes of him who planted these trees! This avenue of lime-tree



plays there ever shines forth a reverence not only for religion, but for the mysteries of life and the world.

Reader, ponder over this, one of the most beautiful of Shakespeare's autobiographical poems:—

Poor soul, the centre of my sinful earth,

Fool'd by those rebel powers that thee array,

Why dost thou pine within, and suffer dearth,

Painting thy outward walls so costly gay?

Why so large cost, having so short a lease,

Dost thou upon thy fading mansion spend?

foliage is believed to be an exact reproduction of that flourishing there in Shakespeare's day, through which he must have walked to the Sabbath services, and under whose canopy he was borne in a nurse's arms at baptism, and at last carried to the grave. Yes!

temple, and made public confession of his shortcomings, and offered up his prayers and intercessions to the Great Being whose beneficence and mercy were ever before him! Yes, indeed, thou, venerable Trinity Church, art more than human fancy can

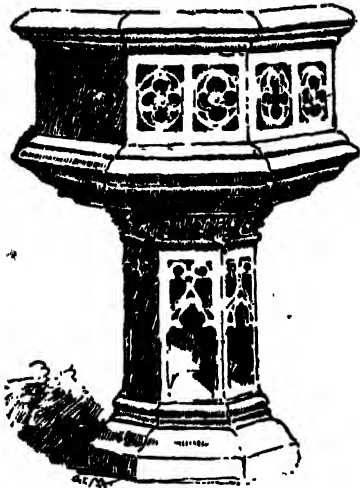


Holy Trinity
Nave
west.

Here, through this very portal, tenderly was the infant borne for the sacrament of baptism in swaddling clothes by his nurse, the envied mother and father, utterly unconscious that their offspring should thereafter move the world with power to no other mortal given, accompanying the precious babe, for the first time to be offered to his Maker. This same pathway, under the then canopy of lime-trees!—how familiar to him, as on each Sabbath morn he attended the holy

paint. Thy architectural beauty is great, whilst in thy enviable charge of the sacred dust, thou art the greatest of all religious shrines in the world. In poetic beauty, apart from its own peerless associations, to our eye there are few temples of God in our land more externally beautiful than this blessed Trinity of Stratford-on-Avon. Certainly our Roman Catholic progenitors knew how to build places of worship, and we have good cause to be thankful for their industry.

It is well they built such churches for us, as we have never been disposed or are unequal to the erection for ourselves. It is to monkish taste, in grouping pier, and arch, and parapet, and pinnacle together in one harmonious whole, we are indebted for such-like noble parish churches as this of Stratford's Holy Trinity, the worthy sepulchre of the world's greatest dust. Such venerable piles are



Modern Font in Holy Trinity.

the result of no one architect's pet fancy, no design of any one generation. The lovely confusion of style and order of architecture, with its quaint conceits, with its delicate and exquisite sculptured lace-work, was the outcome of centuries of patient, loving thought on the part of kings and princes, of scholars and artists, of men of action and men of prayer. No wonder such buildings are inimitable.

Most of the peculiarities exhibited in the buildings of the several dates comprised in the periods covering the construction are markedly evident in Stratford Church. The better to understand these, it is fitting to remember that when Christianity began to erect churches for itself, they were built with special reference to its liturgy and to symbolise its faith. Hence our grand cathedrals and abbey churches were built in the shape of a cross. The head of the cross was the chancel, so called from a screen (*cancelli*) which separated it from the body of the church. Sometimes, as in the case of Holy Trinity, the chancel was not in line with the nave, but inclined to one side. Many visitors regard this as an accident, or, at least, that it had no personal signification.

On the contrary, it had the deepest, and was purposely so out of line in order to remind the people that the head of our Saviour when he was dead on the cross leaned on one side. The body of the cross or nave was for the congregation, and if this was not sufficiently large, aisles or wings were added on either or both sides, and occasionally there were double aisles. The arms of the cross, known as the transept, gave room for small chapels for special services or for increased accommodation. The out-of-line bearing of the chancel and nave of Holy Trinity is more than usually marked, as are also the modes of the construction. There are three kinds of building found in the church erections of these periods, the ordinary rubble, the herring bone, and the ashlar. In the ordinary rubble work the stones are left in their natural rough state in which they were got out of the quarry, and are embedded horizontally or flat in abundance of mortar. In the herring-bone work, the stones were also left in their rough state, but were embedded in the mortar diagonally, or in a sloping direction of an angle of about forty-five degrees. Sometimes these layers of sloping stones were divided by a horizontal layer. Herring-bone work is found plentifully in the old Roman remains, and was practised by the Normans and occasionally by the Saxons. In ashlar work the stones are larger and are cut or squared, and in old writings are called "clene hewen." Little mortar was used in this kind of building, which was employed most in the later churches. The period of each portion of our older churches can be ascertained pretty correctly, skilled architects being thus able to determine the date of an old building to within a few years. At the west side of Holy Trinity north porch there is a small window with a very peculiar hood moulding over it. There is one of very much the same character on the south side of the tower of Beaudesert Church. One of the old pinnacles of Holy Trinity Chancel is still standing, and it is not placed square with the parapet from which it projects, but angularly. The same peculiarity exists in the church at Lapworth, where both kinds of pinnacle exist, and so close together that they can readily be compared with each other.

The building itself is a fine structure dating from Saxon times, and much larger than the wonted dimensions of a parish church, and with its venerable grey walls presents a fine specimen of Perpendicular Gothic—the

architecture which prevailed in England in the latter half of the fourteenth and the early part of the fifteenth century, some portions very much earlier. Certainly it contains some fragments of Norman work. Different parts of the structure were doubtless built at different times; hence the mixture of architectural styles in which Saxon simplicity and Norman grace are beautifully mingled. The grave old central tower belongs to the Norman period, and is the most ancient in date. In Shakespeare's time it was surmounted by a wooden spire forty-two feet in height, covered with lead, but this, being

over the lime-trees that form the interlaced avenue to the church northern door, and from all the low-lying meadows around, in which Shakespeare wandered, it is a most conspicuous as well as beautiful object. Leland conjectures that it occupies the site of an ancient Monastery which existed here three centuries prior to the Norman invasion, and he states as a supposition, that it was rebuilt by Archbishop Stratford. Camden, in his "Britannia," explicitly affirms that it was erected by that prelate, but Dugdale says that the south aisle only was built by him. The avenue of lime-trees abutting on Avon



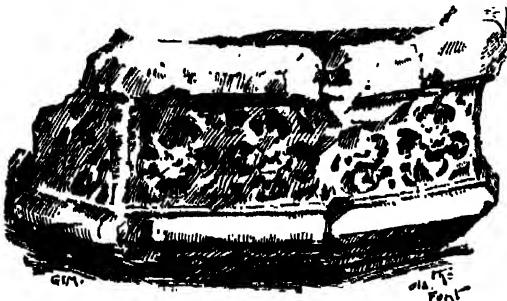
THE EARLIEST KNOWN VIEW OF HOLY TRINITY, THE MILL AND STREAM, FROM AN ENGRAVING OF THE TIME.

considered of inadequate importance, was taken down in 1763, and the present graceful six-sided spire of Warwickshire stone, with fretted battlements all around the roof, erected in the following year. The ancient tower is eighty feet high, and the spire eighty-three, altogether one hundred and sixty-three feet. The internal structure is fully commensurate in dignity with the exterior. It is cruciform, consisting of a nave and two side aisles, a transept or cross aisle, and a chancel or choir, the tower rising from the centre of the cross. The precise period of its erection is not recorded; but if the object of its erection had been to insure that the situation of the sacred shrine that contains the tomb and ashes of the greatest poet of the world should be seen by all comers from as great a distance as possible, it has answered its purpose, for, from the windings of the river, flowing past the churchyard,

Bank, leading to the church from the town, terminates the northern entrance into the nave, which consists of a beautiful porch, buttressed and embattled, and apparently of later date than the adjoining aisle. Above the doorway is a pointed window giving light to a room over the porch, the entrance to which is by a spiral staircase, footworn of ages, in the north aisle. This room was formerly the muniment or Record Chamber. The nave is a noble structure, supported on each side by six pointed arches, which rise from hexagonal columns; above these the sides are divided into twelve compartments forming twelve clerestory pointed windows. The principal entrance into this part of the church is at the west end, under a deeply recessed pointed arch, over which are three conjoined niches, crowned by elegant and lofty canopies. Above is the great western window, which is nearly equal in width to

the nave itself, and is beautifully divided by mullions and tracery. The nave terminates at the western arch of the tower, and until now has been occupied by the organ, which was built by Thomas Swanbrick in 1728. Between the previously existing organ and south spaces there were formerly two altars, one on the north side, dedicated to the Holy Trinity, and the other on the south consecrated to the service of St. Peter and St. Paul. A third altar, dedicated to St. Andrew, formerly existed, but its situation is unknown. The roof of the nave was in its earlier state surrounded by ornamental battlements, enriched by pinnacles, which were taken down in 1764, and rebuilt in their existing very inferior style. At the eastern extremity of the north aisle is a chapel originally dedicated to the Virgin, but now occupied chiefly by the monuments of the Clopton family, whose manor and mansion-house of Clopton are situated about a mile to the north of Stratford, on the road to Henley-in-Arden.

THE TRUE FONT.



Remains of the Old Font from which Shakespeare was baptised.

In the Vestry of Holy Trinity, we have the very Baptismal Font from which Shakespeare received the Holy Baptism of the Church. This battered sacred relic is priceless in the eyes of every lover of the Great Bard.

It has passed through many trials and vicissitudes, even to banishment from the Holy Temple, and the ignominy of having had a spurious rival set up in its place. Possibly in the reign of some fox-hunting vicar, indifferent to his church chancel holding the poet's bones, and who may never have troubled himself to decipher the inscription beneath his monument, the font was banished in exchange for one more to his taste. The parochial accounts of Strat-

ford show that about the middle of the seventeenth century a new font was set up, and the true font from which Shakespeare had been baptized was banished. After many years it was found in the charnel-house, close to the poet's resting-place. When this was pulled down it was moved out into the open churchyard, and from thence taken by one of the parish clerks of the time and used as the trough of the pump at his cottage. Marvellous, therefore, is it that the holy vessel should have resisted, so well as it has done, the impious ravages and ill-treatment it has endured. Very fortunately the good town of Stratford has ever had some resident devotee to kindle and keep alive the memory of him who shall perpetuate it to the end of time. Captain Saunders, of the Warwickshire Militia, was the guardian angel who rescued Shakespeare's baptismal font. All honour to him, for he has done his native town and the world good service. One clerk, Edmund, is said to have been the sinner who desecrated the font to his own house-pump purposes. He was induced to part with it to a stone-mason in the town, who never concealed the treasure, or denied the means through which he acquired it. The gallant Militia officer is described by Phillips as "an enthusiastic admirer of everything relating to Shakespeare, and perhaps he possessed one of the most authentic articles connected with the Bard. In his garden was the fragment of the old font of the Church which Captain Saunders found in a stone-mason's yard at Stratford, and was acknowledged as having been removed from the Church." The late Mr. W. O. Hunt, Town Clerk of Stratford, who throughout his whole lifetime was untiring in his Shakespearean researches, and who especially devoted himself to get at truth in all local matters connected with the great author's home and residence at Stratford, has left papers showing clearly that he purchased the font of a Mr. Thomas Heritage, who had bought it of Captain Saunders's representatives. Mr. Hunt presented it to the then Vicar, Mr. Granville Granville, and thus earned the credit of a real benefactor, such as will ever honourably associate his name with this venerable and sacred relic.

The genial-hearted Dr. Collis, a former Vicar of Stratford, an earnest helper in all that concerns the memory of the mighty dust lying under the Chancel of the temple, was firm in his conviction as to the identity of the Old Font. He says it is beyond all

doubt the Font in which Shakespeare was baptized. Dr. Collis writes :—

"Stratford-on-Avon,
"November 12, 1873.

"DEAR MAJOR WALTER,—You are quite correct in your views regarding the old broken and damaged Baptismal Font in the vestry of my church. It is the actual Font in which William Shakespeare was baptized on the 25th April, 1564, two days after his birth. Its architectural features show it to be of the date of the latter half of the fifteenth century; I should say about 1480. Most probably it was put in by old Dean Balshall, my excellent predecessor, who rebuilt the Chancel out of his own revenues. A modern and not very good copy of it was put up in the church in 1840, on the false idea that then prevailed of 'restoration,' and the old one was taken away just as the then 'restorers' copied the canopies of Thomas à Becket's Sedilia, and threw away the old historic ones, with all their mediæval history. To my predecessor, Mr. Granville Granville, is due the bringing back this Old Font into the church. He also set up the fragments of Becket's Sedilia in the church. About three years since, I removed them into the vestry, to preserve them from the corroding of the weather, and the depredations and scribblings of the Smith, Jones, and Robinson caste, and hope some day to restore them to their original place.

"Yours faithfully, J. D. COLLIS, D.D.,
"Vicar of Stratford-upon-Avon."

"To Major James Walter."

Time itself has fallen asleep in this ancient place. The low sob of the organ only deepens the awful sense of its silence and its dreamless repose. Beeches, yews, and elms grow in the churchyard, and many a low tomb and leaning stones are there in the shadow, grey with moss and mouldering with age. Birds have built their nests in many crevices in the time-worn tower, round which at sunset you may see them circle, with chirp of greeting or with call of anxious discontent. Near by flows the peaceful river, reflecting the grey spire in its dark, shining, silent waters. In the long and lonesome meadows beyond it the primroses in springtide stand in their golden banks among the clover, and the frilled and fluted bell of the cowslip, hiding its single drop of blood in its bosom, closes its petals as the night comes down.

Personal vanity on the part of churchwardens or other dignitaries of the hour,

doubtless deterred by the heart's warning that the mighty dead alone shall be whispered of within its holy precincts, is unknown here. In many of our old country churches is to be found an inscription in the front of the organ gallery or other conspicuous place, informing the curious, who may also become if they like the incredulous, that the church was "repaired



AVON MEADOW AT EVENING.

and beautified" in some year of our Lord by a parishioner, an aspirant for immortality. Everybody nowadays prates of proportions, orders, outlines, etc., and every believed connoisseur, who hardly knows a corbel from a capital, affects to criticise ancient Gothic as gnostically as though he were Sir Christopher Wren or Ruskin. It is a natural aspiration that such class may never be permitted to try their hands on the venerable fane holding the dust of Shakespeare. The question too often arises as to what our ancestors meant in many cases by "beautifying." Too generally, alas! their ideas consisted in crowding sacred buildings with cumbrous woodwork, washing over corbels and carvings, and surrounding unsightly monuments with still more hideous iron railings. The Stratford temple is singularly free from such enormities; may the existing few vanish under the good taste of the ruling powers! No illustration can do justice to this lovely scene. It is a surpassingly beautiful approach, worthy in itself a pilgrimage to Stratford. As the branches meet and closely interlace each other, and with their impervious foliage exclude the rays of the sun, they seem, as it were, to encur-tain the bed of death. On many a bright morning has the nuptial train of a town's beauty been seen to wind from beneath this porch, while the bells rang merrily above, and the happy pair returned to a wedding feast in well-furnished rooms, that, long converted to other purposes, now cease to know such guests.

"For, oh! how sweet to maiden's ear,
While tears of joy she's shedding,
When first she hears her own church bells
Ring blithely for her wedding."

We once walked up this lime avenue on a Sabbath morning, in company with Ralph Waldo Emerson, the great American essayist, to join with him in worship in the chancel, close to the grave of the great seer; and how did Emerson's burning, unsurpassable words force themselves upon us!

"What king has he not taught state, as Talma taught Napoleon?"

"What maiden has not found him finer than her delicacy?"

"What lover has he not outloved?"

"What sage has he not outseen?"

"What gentleman has he not instructed in the rudeness of his behaviour?"

The American writer, Elihu Burritt, has written, "Blessings on the man who planted these trees—probably a humble labourer who, with rude pick and spade, placed these now noble elms, when tiny seedlings, each less than a finger's girth. Truly, he who plants trees for posterity ranks with him who, the Psalmist declares, 'passing through the valley of Baca, maketh it a well.' Put him under the same blessing of his kind, for he deserves it. He gives them the richest earthly gift that a man can give to a coming generation. He gives them *time*. He gives them a whole century as an extra. If they would give a gold sovereign for every solid inch of oak, they could not hire one built to the stature of one of these trees in less than two or three centuries' time, though they dug about it and nursed it as the man did the vine in Scripture. Blessed be the man, rich or poor, young or old, especially the old, who sets his heart and hand to this cheap but sublime and priceless architecture. Let those who have seen Memphis and Nineveh, or any or all the great cities of the East, ancient or modern, come and sit in Stratford Churchyard, and survey its tree Cathedral, and mark the order and graces of its architecture. What did the Ptolemies, their predecessors or successors in Egypt, or sovereigns of Chaldaic names in Assyria, or ambitious builders in the ages of Pericles or Augustus, in Greece or Rome? Their structures were the wonder of the world. Mighty men they were, whose will was law, whose subjects worked it out without a murmur or a reward. But in all probability the humblest cottagers were the Michael Angelos of the lovely branch and leaf structure, to which we look up with



Holy Trinity
NW

such admiration—a few pence paid for their labour and a few more for the little trees. How cheap, and yet how priceless has been the gifts of these trees to the many generations who have known them in their various stages of progress towards

present magnificence! What a wealth of future glory can a poor labouring man give to coming generations! They are the most generous crops ever sown by human hands. All others the sower reaps and garners into his own personal enjoyment; but this yields its best harvest to those who come after him. This is a seedling for posterity. From this well of Baca shall they draw the cooling luxury of the gift when the hands that made it shall long since have mouldered into dust."

THE MONUMENT.

As probably the truest representation of Shakespeare, the monumental bust in the chancel of Stratford Church will ever continue, as now, the most celebrated in the whole world. As giving the only authentic portrait, its interest is second only to his grave.

In presence of that monument the mind feels constrained to Richard II. (act iii., scene 2) to

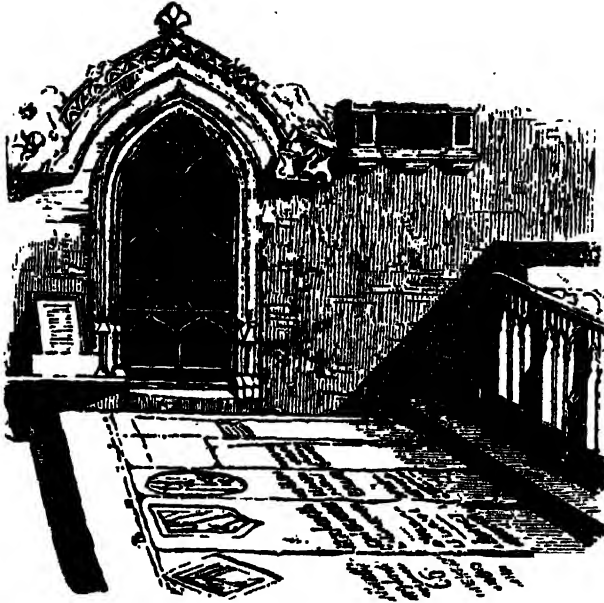
"Talk of graves, of worms, and epitaphs;
Make dust our paper, and with rainy eyes
Write sorrow on the bosom of the earth."

No cathedral holding the bones of kings and saints and heroes shall stir the heart or move the mind like this. Never shall any enshrine dust so sacred as this. It is, indeed, a fair house of God. No more fitting resting-place than amid these pillars and arches, with the plash of Avon for requiem. The architectural beauty is great, whilst in its enviable charge of the sacred dust it is dear to Shakespearean hearts as the greatest of all religious shrines in the world.

Underneath that stone so fearfully inscribed is the grave which divides us, not from one man, but from unnumbered men and women that might have taught and delighted the world; it seems to hold, not one life, but a multitude of unacted lives with their passions and vicissitudes. Here lies not one solitary figure, but a pageant, and one feels that, so long as time hath dominion here, *he* will never spare such another spirit to eternity.

Regarding its date and history,





THE SHAKESPEARE GRAVES AT FOOT OF THE ALTAR

there is, at least, no corner left for doubt. We know it was there before 1623, as evidenced by Leonard Digges' verses prefixed to the first edition of Shakespeare's work, and the probability is it was erected as close upon his death as the sculptor could complete the work. A half-length figure of the poet is placed in a niche which is arched over and fronted by Corinthian columns of black polished marble, with gilded capitals and bases. The architraves are of marble, and the arms of Shakespeare are supported above the entablature. The crest is a falcon grasping a golden spear, and the supporters are two boys in a sitting posture, representing Death and the Grave. The one on the right, emblematic of the former, holds an inverted torch in one hand and rests the other on a skull. The sculptor of the bust, which is life-size and formed out of a block of soft limestone, was Gerard Johnson, a native of Amsterdam, and who was termed "a tomb-maker." Whatever called, he was an artist of marked power of conception and ability in execution, and was so recognised in his day. Old churches of London furnish numerous monuments of his execution, all bearing testimony to his skill, and it appears he was at the time noted for remarkable faithfulness in his chisel productiveness of likeness. Doubtless, Shakespeare's literary

contemporaries, and especially his former theatrical partners and associates, not only raised the monument, but were consulted as to its character and design. We may be sure these, all of whom loved "Gentle Will" so well, would be consulted as to the likeness, and would agree and approve the resemblance as his "to the life." Sculptors are of belief that the features were obtained from a cast or mask taken after death. This mask has only recently been discovered. At an early era the monumental figure is known to have been painted over, the term then applied to it "from nature," but it is questionable if such was its character when first set up after the poet's demise. The face and hands were flesh colour, the eyes a light hazel, and the hair and beard auburn. The dress was a scarlet doublet slashed on the breast, over which was a loose black gown without sleeves. Formerly, there was a stone pen in the right hand of

the bust; this having been broken is replaced by a quill pen. The upper part of the cushion was crimson, the lower green; the cord which bound it and the tassels were gilt. Persons familiar with the monumental erections of that time in Warwickshire, Gloucestershire, Wiltshire, and Somersetshire will readily recognise similar work in churches in other of these counties, and Gerard Johnson's handiwork as a sculptor was by no means of a mean order. There seems to have existed at several stages of this monument a desire on the part of aspirants to fame to colour and bedizen it over with paint. Whether such artistic manias were the result of enthusiastic admiration of genius and a desire to evidence appreciation thereof, who shall determine? After remaining over one hundred years in what may be termed its first-known state, Mr. John Ward, grandfather of Mrs. Siddons and Mr. Kemble, caused it to be repaired in 1748 and the original colours preserved, "from the profits of a representation of Othello." This was a generous and apparently judicious act, and therefore very unlike the next alteration it was subjected to in 1793. In that year Malone, one of Shakespeare's commentators, assuming to himself the office of decorator, was pleased to cover it over with one or more coats of paint, and thus at once destroyed its presumed original character.



and altogether marred the expression of the face. Malone, not content with daubing and disfiguring Shakespeare's monument, tried his hand also on the effigy of John Combe, his friend, who lies beside the altar; no doubt uniformity was the idea uppermost. One Simon Collins, a skilled craftsman, by aid of bath and chemicals, washed off the abominations and restored the former existing colours.

Reflecting minds banish all the wretched

scribblings referring to the great author's imagined life, and dwell only on the words inscribed on this monumental tomb, erected close upon his death and in the eyes of his neighbours, who knew and felt they alone were a just record of the reputation he bore among men.

If a genuine portrait of Alexander, of Homer, or of Alfred the Great, be regarded as a desideratum in the history of art, so is that of Shakespeare; for though *the English*

poet is comparatively a modern, yet it is as difficult and doubtful to substantiate the authenticity of a portrait of him, as of either the ancient Grecian hero, or poet, or of the more estimable English monarch. There is neither proof nor intimation that Shakespeare ever sat for a picture; and it must be admitted that the whole of the *presumed portraits* "come in such questionable shapes," and with such equivocal pedigrees, that discredit attaches to all. Not so the monumental bust in Holy Trinity: this appeals to our eyes and understandings with all the force of truth. We view it as a family record; as a memorial raised by the affection and esteem of his relatives, to keep alive contemporary admiration, and to excite the glow of enthusiasm in their posterity. The sculptor who executed it may be said to have been a personal friend of Shakespeare, living as he did in the immediate neighbourhood of the theatre, and was known to have been there frequently. It was the work of one Gerard Johnson, or more correctly, Jansen, he being a Dutchman born in Amsterdam, and settled in London when twenty-six years of age. England was then very far behind in all artistic work. There were but few artists of any eminence in London; whatever of sculpture was needed, had to be executed by foreigners, and more especially by the Dutch. Jansen's tomb-making place was near the western door of St. Saviour's Church and London Bridge, and within a few minutes' walk of the Globe Theatre. He is expressly termed a "tomb-maker," and employed in his workshop "four journeymen, two apprentices, and one Englishman." No reasonable man will doubt the sculptor's personal knowledge of Shakespeare. His occupation being conducted close to the theatre, the great dramatist would often look in and see him engaged in his creative records of frail mortality; little dreaming that his mallet and chisel would at an early day be employed in creating a memorial of himself of interest far surpassing any other in the world. This invaluable "Effigy" is attested by tradition, consecrated by time, and preserved in the inviolability of its own simplicity and sacred station. It was evidently executed immediately after the poet's decease. Hitherto, Dr. Hall and his wife, Shakespeare's daughter, have been credited with the superintendence of its erection, but it has been ascertained that the subscribers to the memorial avoided their interference, fearing their extreme puritanical views.

The principal object of attraction on this monument is the counterfeit presentment of the poet "in his habit as he lived," wearing the garb in which "William Shakespeare, gentleman," on high days and holidays walked along the streets of London and of Stratford. This monumental bust was erected very close upon his death, and



the sculptor employed was the ablest available at the time. The artist having at the time of its execution been twenty-six years resident in London, must have continually seen Shakespeare, though, as painters, sculptors, and anatomists all coincide in thinking it likely that it has been worked from a cast of his features taken after death, that may have made little matter. There is every reason to regard it as an authentic and a faithful representation of the form, features, and expression of the dramatist.

Fairholt says that "an intent study of this bust enforces the belief that all the manifold peculiarities of feature so characteristic of the poet, and which no chance could have originated and no theory account for, must have resulted from its being a transcript of the man." "It appeals," says the eminent antiquarian Britton, "to our eyes and understanding with all the force of truth." We view it as a memorial raised by the affection and esteem of his literary and theatrical associates, to keep alive contemporary admiration, and to excite the glow of enthusiasm in posterity. It is what in our day is termed a subscription monument, and no doubt a large sum was collected and spent on its execution.

While looking at the bust, as one must do, from the ground, it should be remembered that as the head is some eight or nine feet from the grave-stones, the features are foreshortened, and the eyes—for which the sculptor had not the living guide—to some critics appear as if they had a vague stare, while the arch of the eye-brows and the character of the eyelids do not come properly into view to harmonize the features. Hence the fulness of the chin and throat, the slight fall in the cheek, and the little bit of teeth showing, as if the poet were in the act of smiling, come somewhat into prominence, and detract, in the eye of modern critics, from the apparent dignity of the portrait. No one, however, can mistake the strong purpose-like solidity of that mass of brain; or fail to regard it as the head of a kindly, wise, and business-minding man. Indeed, we must never forget that, poet as he was, "the *business* of Shakespeare, through all the active portion of his life—the business by which he gained his livelihood, and realized a competent income—was that of a dramatic artist," a reproduction of the poetry of *life*; and the bust shows just such a man as one would suppose to be capable at once of fulness of life in himself, and of so managing others as to work out his aims by their agency. The most careful analysis and most thorough testing have only resulted in giving reason for affirming that the bust has been executed with extreme delicacy and remarkable ease.

A special tracing of the monumental inscription shows thus:—

INDICIO PELLACENIO SOCRATEM ARTE MARONEM
 TERRA TECTA POPULIS MARET. OLYMPUS HABET
 STARS PASSENGER WITH GHOST HOZ BY SO FAST
 REEDIE FROM GHOST WHOM ENVIOUS DEATH HATH PLAST
 WITH IN THIS MONUMENT SHAKESPEARE WITH WHOME
 QUICK NATURE DIED WHOSE NATURE DIED DECK Y' TEMPE
 PARTURE TEN COSTE SELF ALL Y' HE HATH WRET
 LIZZESTING ARE BAL PAGE TO SERVE HIS WIFE'S

In our English tongue—

A NESTOR IN PRACTICAL JUDGMENT AND VIRTUE OF LIFE;
 A SOCRATES IN WISDOM; A VIRGIL IN ART.

The first of the gravestones of the Shakespeare family is that of his wife, sweet Anne! immediately beneath his monument. It is a flat stone, the surface injured by time, having a small brass plate let into it, with an inscription which tells that she died on the 6th of August, 1623, aged 67. Anne's epitaph is a verse of six lines in Latin, and it expresses with quaint and touching earnestness, the deep affection of her daughter Susanna, with whom Mrs. William Shakespeare resided after her husband's death. Believed to have been written at Susanna's request by her husband, Dr. Hall, it reads thus:—

HEERE LYETH INTERRED THE BODY OF ANNE WIFE
 OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE THE
 6TH DAY OF AVGV. 1623 BEING OF THE AGE OF 67 YEARES
 Vbera tu mater, tu lac, vitamq. dedisti,
 Væ mihi pro tanto munere saxa dabo.
 Quam mallet, amoue at lapidem bene angel' ore
 Exeat christi corpus, imago tua, exeat
 Sed nil vota valent, venias cito Christe resurget
 Clausa licet tumulo mater et astra petet.

"Heere lyeth interred the body of Anne, wife of William Shakespeare, who departed this life the 6th day of Avgv., 1623, being of the age of 67 yeares.

Vbera tu, mater, tu lac, vitamq. dedisti,
 Væ mihi pro tanto munere saxa dabo,
 Quam mallet, amoue at lapidem bonus angel' ore
 Exeat christi corpus, imago tua
 Sed nil vota valent, venias cito Christe resurget,
 Clausa licet tumulo mater et astra petet."

They evidently embody the sense of two well-known verses of the New Testament. A long-ago accepted rendering runs thus:—

"Thou, O mother, gavest me the breast, thou gavest milk and life
 Alas! for such great gifts, I, in return, give unto thee a sepulchre!
 O, that some good angel would move away the stone from its mouth,
 That thy form might come forth, even as did the body of Christ!
 But wishes are of no avail! Come quickly, O Christ!
 My mother—though shut up in the tomb—shall rise again and seek the stars."

Next is the grave of the Immortal, traditionally said to have been dug seventeen

feet deep at the time of his burial, on which lies a large slab of stone, quarried in the neighbourhood, and bearing the world-famed inscription conveying his benediction to the respector and his malediction to the violator of the peace of his grave. It was on the 25th of April, 1616, his body was consigned to its native resting-place under the north side of the chancel of this grand church.

GOOD FREND FOR IESVS SAKE FORBEARE
TO DIGG THE DVST ENCLOSED HEARE
BLESE BE Y^E MAN Y^E SPARES THES STONES.
AND CVRST BE HE Y^E MOVES MY BONES.

Who dares question the words being those of the great dramatist himself? A peculiarity which it possesses over ordinary inscriptions is the abbreviation *Mat.* and the grouping together of some of the letters after the fashion of a monogram. Let it be borne in mind there is authority, such as few can question, in the fact that it was there chiselled when the great one was laid in the grave.

The maledictory curse inscribed on the gravestone ever has been and ever will be of absorbing interest to the world, despite Mr. Phillips' curt dismissal of it as "wretched doggrel." If this strong term was intended as an expression of his conviction that Shakespeare had no hand in its production, he has signally failed. Every visitor to the shrine dwells upon it, and the majority are awe-stricken when, standing at the doubly-hallowed spot, they decipher its affectionate entreating, "Good Frend, for Iesus' sake, forbear," attended with blessing for compliance, followed by the denunciatory "Curst be he that moves my bones."

Haliwell Phillips' disbelief goes for nothing more than an individual opinion. The world will decide for itself, and, after all, when it is known and felt that though his hand may not have traced the actual words, yet that they embodied the desire of his heart, doubt may comfortably be dismissed, and cavil at his grave-edge may be withheld. Hitherto generations incline decidedly to a belief that the words proceeded from him at some time of his life, either written or orally. Judging from the immunity they secured, the world will ever ascribe the desire as his, and it is not needed to show that he bequeathed an instruction that the lines should be cut on his gravestone.

The graves of other members of his family are in close proximity. They are placed side by side and lie in a row upon the second step of the altar, their position affording unmistakable evidence of the high esteem in which Shakespeare and his family were held in their native town. One stone marks the resting-place of Susanna, the poet's eldest daughter, whose epitaph is singularly beautiful and suggestive:—

"Witty above her sexe, but that's not all,
Wise to salvation was good Mistris Hall,
Something of Shakspeare was in that,
but this
Wholly of him, with whom she's now in blisse.

"Then, Passenger, hast ne'er a teare,
To weep with her that wept with all?
That wept, yet set herself to chere
Them up with comforts cordiall.
Her love shall live, her mercy spread,
When thou hast ne'er a teare to shed."

The next is over the body of her husband, Dr. John Hall. The third is that of Thomas Nashe, the first husband of Shakespeare's only granddaughter. The fourth is over the remains of the poet, and the last, immediately beneath Shakespeare's monument, marks the resting-place of Anne Shakespeare, his wife.






Close underneath the monument on the north-west side of the chancel is a doorway into what was a formerly existing old chapel, known as the charnel house, from having been used as a depository for human bones dug up and exposed in the churchyard, when



Interior of Old Charnel House.

new graves were required. Until the law prevented burial in English churchyards, public feeling was shocked by coffins being

GRAVESTONES OF THE SHAKESPEARE FAMILY IN THEIR EXISTENT ORDER FACING THE RAIL OF THE ALTAR.

 <p>HEERE LYETH Y^E BODY OF SVSANNA, WIFE TO JOHN HALL, GENT: Y^E DAUGHTER OF WIL- LIAM SHAKESPEARE, GENT: SHEE DECEASED Y^E 11th OF JVLV A. 1649. AGED . 65.</p> <p>Witty above her sexe, but that's not all, Wise to Salvation was good Mistris Hall. Something of Shakespeare was in that, but this Wholly of him with whom she's now in blisse.</p> <p>Then, Passenger, hast ne'er a teare, To weep with her that wept with all? That wept, yet set herself to chere Them up with comforts cordiall. Her love shall live, her mercy spread, When thou hast ne'er a teare to shed.</p>	 <p>HEERE LYETH Y^E BODY OF JOHN HALL, GENT: HE MARR- SVSANNA, Y^E DAUGHTER OF WILL SHAKESPEARE, GENT. HEE DECEASED NOVE^R 1635. AGED . 60.</p> <p>Hallus hic situs est medica celeberrimus art e, Expectans regni gaudia læta Del. Dignus erat meritis qui Nestora vin- ceret annis, In terris omnes, sed rapit aqua dies; Ne tumulo, quid desit adest fidissima conjux, Et vitæ Comitum nunc quod: mortis habet.</p>	 <p>HEERE RESTETH Y^E BODY OF THOMAS NASHE, ESQ. HE . MAR. ELIZABETH, THE DAUGHTER OF HEIRE OF JOHN . HALL, GENT. HE DIED APRILL . 4 . A . 1647 . AGED . 53.</p> <p>Fata manent omnes, hunc non virtute carentem vt neq diuitiis abstulit atra dies. Abstrulit, et referet lux ultima, siste viator, si peritura paras, per male parua peris.</p>	<p>These inscriptions are carefully traced from the original gravestones. A magnifying glass will enable that of the Poet's wife to be easily read.</p> 	 <p>The gravestone of Anne, wife of William Shakespeare, immediately beneath the Poet's monument at the north end of the Chancel.</p>
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The Latin inscription on the stone of Mrs. Hall was obliterated many years since to make space for an inscription for some candidate for immortality. Fortunately, the historian, Dugdale, had previously noted the inscription, now restored to the original wording.

cut into and their contents tipped out to make way for new-comers. Public cemeteries have prevented this. There is little doubt that the "Charnel House" was a part of the old chancel, but which, proving serviceable as a receptacle for human remains, was permitted to remain when the later chancel was erected. There exist two sketches of this non-existent building, showing variation, though in the main corroborative of each other. This so-called charnel house was Saxon, and was pulled down in MDCCC.

me this church is above eighty years old." All known interpretation of this inscription extending back into the past is conclusive on this subject. The words have ever been regarded as an inspiration of the poet himself and none other, and have universally proved a terror to ghoulish grave meddlers.

It is difficult to determine whether Dowdall's companion and cicerone on the occasion of his visit to Stratford Church was the officiating minister or the "Amen" leader of the congregation, inasmuch as the term "Clerk"



No stronger evidence can be needed of Shakespeare's responsibility for the lines inscribed on his gravestone than the title of Charnel House, by which this portion of the sacred building was called. The purpose to which it was applied was sufficient to excite horror in any mind.

There is a letter dated 1693, in which the writer, Dowdall, after describing the Shakespeare monument and giving the inscription, says: "Near the wall where the monument is erected lies the plain freestone, underneath which the body lies buried, with this epitaph, made by himself a little before his death." "Not one, for fear of the written curse, dare touch his gravestone, though his wife and daughter did earnestly desire to be laid in the same grave with him." Now Dowdall was an unquestionable authority in his own and after days, and the oldest and most interesting Shakespearean document in existence is this very narrative of his observations in Warwickshire and of his visit on April 10th, 1693, to Holy Trinity, Stratford. He tells us positively that the inscription of blessing and imprecation was prepared by none other than the grave occupant, shortly before his death. "The clerk who showed

applies to either or both. The probability, however, is that a visitor such as Dowdall would be honoured by the presence of the vicar himself. The evidence as to the words being Shakespeare's and none other's is conclusive. His fellow-townsmen one and all realized them as being his and nobody else's. His wife and daughters, how greatly soever they desired to lie in the same grave with him, dared not lift the stone, but had to content themselves to repose alongside the awful barrier.

The charming American writer William Winter, whose capacity for forming a fair opinion as to whether the lines are in any degree likely to have proceeded from Shakespeare himself ranks higher than Phillips', thus refers to the solemn grave anathema: "Writers in modern times have been pleased to disparage this inscription, and to conjecture that it was the work of a sexton and not of the poet, but no one denies that it has accomplished its purpose in preserving the sanctity of Shakespeare's rest. Its rugged strength, its simple pathos, its fitness, and its sincerity make it felt as unquestionably the utterance of Shakespeare himself, when it is read upon the slab that covers him. There the musing traveller full well con-

ceives how dearly the poet must have loved the beautiful scenes of his birthplace, and with what intense longing he must have desired to sleep undisturbed in the most sacred spot, in their bosom. He doubtless had some premonition of his approaching death. Three months before it came he drafted his will. A little later he attended to the marriage of his younger daughter. Within less than a month of his death he executed the will, and thus set his affairs in perfect order. His handwriting in the three signatures to that

pronounced as he should on this anathema subject.

He tells us that the tradition is as old as 1693, and that nothing has ever since occurred to shake it. The known fact of her husband having penned the lines was the sole preventive cause of her interment in the grave with him. These assurances, taken together, confirm the statement as to the solemnly-recorded curse emanating from none other but himself. And in modern times the anathema has doubtless had its effect, and prevented the removal of his ashes to Westminster Abbey.

Susanna bore but one child, Elizabeth, who became successively Mrs. Nash and Lady Barnard, who, dying in 1670, was buried at Abington. She left no child by either husband, and in her the race of Shakespeare became extinct. The line of graves beginning at the north wall of the chancel, and extending across to the south, is devoted entirely to the graves of Shakespeare and his family with but a single exception. The stones are reverently laid east and west, and all but one bear inscriptions; that one is under the



paper conspicuously exhibits the uncertainty and lassitude of shattered nerves. He was probably quite worn out. Within the space, at the utmost, of twenty-five years, he had written his thirty-seven plays, his 154 sonnets, and his two or more long poems; had passed through much and painful toil and through many sorrows; had made his fortune as author, actor and manager; and had superintended, to excellent advantage, his property in London and his large estates, for those days, in Stratford and its neighbourhood." The world, with ourselves, will accept the American writer Winter's judgment in this matter, his range of literature is higher than Phillips', and in arriving at a conviction he brings more feeling to bear on the question. No man has discoursed more eloquently on the home of Shakespeare and the country around it than William Winter; he holds the hearts of all visitors to Stratford, and he has

south wall, and possibly covers the dust of Judith (wife of Thomas Quiney), the youngest daughter of Shakespeare, who, surviving her three children, and thus leaving no descendants, died in 1662. Upon the gravestone of Susanna has been introduced an inscription commemorative of Richard Watts, who is not, however, known to have had any relationships with either Shakespeare or his descendants. The vaults themselves may possibly in the first instance have been constructed by the monks when the church was first built, with the object of their occupancy by great prelates of the church. Verily a great one indeed took possession, one whose occupancy shall be heralded throughout all ages! Other persons may possibly be entombed in these vaults. Shakespeare's father, who died in 1601, and his mother, Mary Arden, who died in 1608, were buried somewhere in the church of Holy Trinity. His

infant sisters Joan, Margaret and Anne, and his brother Richard, who died aged 39, in 1613, may also have been laid to rest in this place. Of the death and burial of his brother Gilbert there is no record. His sister Joan, —the second Mrs. Hart—would naturally have been placed with her relatives. His brother Edmund, dying in 1607, aged 27, was laid under the pavement of St. Saviour's, Southwark. The boy Hamnet, dying before his father had risen to much local eminence, rests probably in an undistinguished grave in the churchyard. Thus we see that the family of Shakespeare was short-lived and soon extinguished. The family of Anne Hathaway also has nearly disappeared, the last living descendant of the Hathaways being Mrs. Taylor, the present occupant of Anne's cottage at Shottery. Thus, one by one, from the pleasant gardened town of Stratford, they went to take up their long abode in that old church, which was ancient even in their infancy, and which, watching through the

published within seven years after his death, thus speaks of the Stratford monument:—

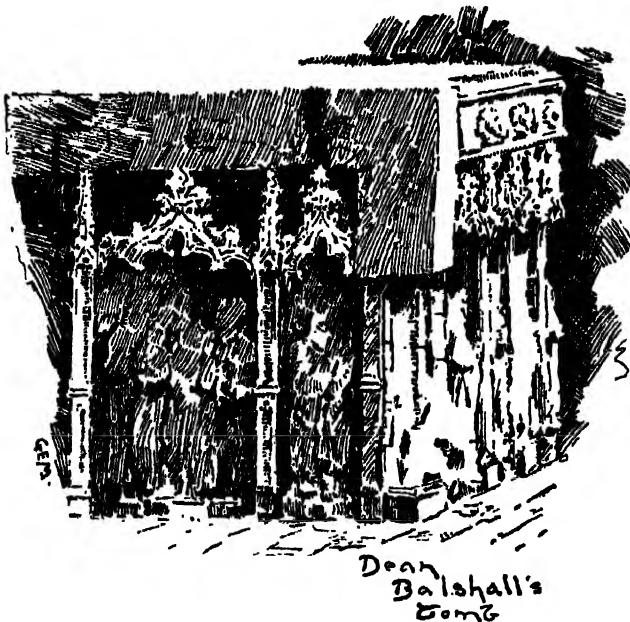
Shakespeare, at length thy pious fellows give
The world thy works; thy works, by which outlive
Thy tomb, thy name must: when that stone is rent,
And time dissolves thy Stratford monument,
Here we alive shall view thee still. This book,
When brass and marble fade, shall make thee look
Fresh to all ages: when posterity
Shall loath what's new, think all is prodigy
That is not Shakespeare's, every line, each verse,
Here shall revive, redeem thee from thy hearse.
Nor fire, nor cank'ring age—as Naso said
Of his—thy wit-fraught book shall once invade:
Nor shall I e'er believe or think thee dead,
Though miss'd, until our bankrupt stage be sped
(Impossible) with some new strain to out-do
Passions of Juliet and her Romeo;
Or till I hear a scene more nobly take,
Than when thy half-sword parleying Roman spake:
Till these, till any of thy volumes rest,
Shall with more fire, more feeling be express'd,
Be sure, our Shakespeare, thou canst never die,
But crowned with laurel, live eternally.

Now, whatever the poetical worth of Digges lines may be, certain it is that in these lines he

has contributed no mean biography; he looked prophetically into the future, in telling the good folk of his own day, that when Jansen's monument at Stratford shall be dissolved, yet then shall the writings of Shakespeare be fresh to all ages.

Dugdale, in his "Antiquities of Warwickshire" 1656, gives a print of the monument, but drawn and engraved in a most tasteless and inaccurate style; and he observes in the text, that the poet was *famous*, and thus entitled to such distinction. Langbaine, in his account "of English Dramatic Poets," 1691, pronounces the Stratford bust, Shakespeare's "true effigies." These not only confirm its history, but assure us of its being a faithful portraiture of the poet. In the age this was executed, it was customary to portray the heads and figures of illustrious and

eminent persons by monumental statues and busts. Many were cut in alabaster and in white marble, whilst others were formed of freestone. In the reigns of Henrys VI., VII., and VIII. some of the English monumental sculpture is remarkable for combining the essentials of breadth, simplicity and nature. During Elizabeth's reign it gradually



centuries in its monastic solitude on the shore of Avon, has seen their lands and houses devastated by flood and fire, the places that knew them changed by the tooth of time, and almost all the associations of their lives obliterated by the improving hand of destruction.

Leonard Digges, in a poem praising the works and worth of Shakespeare, and

degenerated; and under that of James there was greater debasement. Some of the artists studiously endeavoured to perpetuate true portraits, or effigies, of the persons commemorated. Indeed it is quite clear that they aimed rather to produce likeness, than tasteful composition. This is evinced in the statue of Queen Elizabeth, in Westminster Abbey Church; in the bust of Camden, in the same edifice; the statue of Lord Bacon at St. Albans; the bust of Stow and numerous others in London and elsewhere. All show that the artists sought for prototypes in nature; either by modelling the respective persons while living, or by taking casts after

neglected or insulted bust in its original state.

Jansen was the leading London "monument maker" of Shakespeare's day, and at the period of his death was at his artistic best, proved by his handiwork now traceable in and around London. There is a marked Jansen characteristic in all. Dwelling in Southwark among the players, and near the theatre, he would be generally known to them. Actors and literary men being the parties furnishing the money for this tribute of affection to be erected to his memory is an assurance of their knowledge of capability. Jansen is known to have been



MISERERE SEATS IN CHANCEL OF HOLY TRINITY.

death, and so in our belief was it in the case of the Holy Trinity Shakespeare head.

Shakespeare's monumental bust is the size of life, formed out of a block of soft stone, and originally painted in imitation of the countenance and dress of the poet. The eyes were of a light hazel, and the hair and beard auburn; the doublet or coat was scarlet, and covered with a loose black gown, or tabard, without sleeves; the upper part of the cushion was green, the under half crimson, and the tassels gilt. Such appear to have been the features of this immortal, but

Shakespeare's personal friend, and would do his utmost that the counterpart he was engaged to chisel should be faithful in likeness as in execution.

Too much prominence cannot be accorded the fact of the monumental bust being the contribution of friends who cherished most highly his character, disposition and gifts. All the subscribers to its execution and erection may be said to have been professional contemporaries whose main desire would be that the bust should be thoroughly commemorative, a distinct reproduction of

the features of their much-loved "gentle" friend. There was no delay in its execution, all was done while the lineaments of face were fresh in their memories. Thankful indeed should we be that such unquestionable representation exists.

That the sculptors of Shakespeare's age did frequently, if not invariably, execute their figures from authentic casts, might be shown by reference to numerous instances of monumental effigies, corresponding in the minutest features with paintings and other artistic representations of the same individuals; and the peculiar and remarkable characteristics of the bust of Shakespeare

and other eminent sculptors have expressed their belief that it was worked from a cast from life, or rather, perhaps, death. "There are," Chantrey says, "in the original, marks of individuality which are not to be observed in the usual cast from it; for instance, the markings about the eyes, the wrinkles on forehead, and the undercutting of the moustachios." Wordsworth wrote of it, "I agree in the authenticity of the bust; I cannot but esteem this resemblance of the illustrious original as more to be relied upon than any other. As far as depends upon the intrinsic evidence of the features, the mighty genius of Shakespeare would have placed any



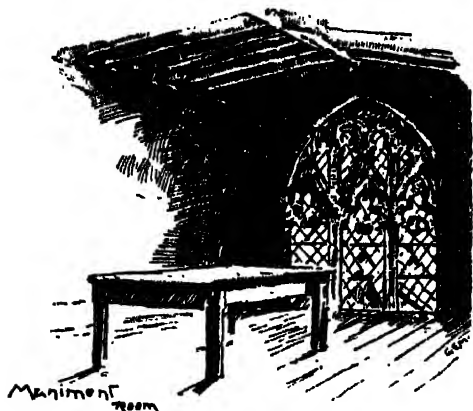
MISERERE SEATS IN CHANCEL OF HOLY TRINITY.

preclude the supposition that it constituted an exception to a rule so general.

Haliwell Phillips says, "The bust is beyond the reach of the doubt which attaches to the portraits, and is in no way assailable to hesitating criticism. It is at once the most interesting memorial of the dramatist that remains, and the only one that brings him before us in form and substance. There is a living and a mental likeness in this monument; one that grows upon us by contemplation and makes us unwilling to accept any other resemblance." Sir Francis Chantrey

record of his physiognomy under considerable disadvantages; for who could shape out to himself features and a countenance that would appear worthy of such a mind? What least pleases in the monumental portrait is the cheek and jowl: the former wants sentiment, and there is too much of the latter." This invaluable relic, then, may be considered as a correct resemblance of the bard. The impress of that mighty mind which ranged at will through all the realms of nature and fancy, and which, though incessantly employed in the personification of passion and

of feeling, was at all times great without effort, and at peace within itself, is visible in the exquisite harmony and symmetry of the whole head and countenance. These,



not only in each separate feature, in the swell and expansion of the forehead, in the commanding sweep of the eyebrow, in the undulating outline of the nose, and in the open sweetness of the lips, but in their combined and integral expression, breathe of him, of whom it may be said, in his own emphatic language, that :—

"We ne'er shall look upon his like again."

A most interesting circumstance in connexion with the Shakespeare bust, if the supposition on which proceeds can be relied on, is the discovery some years ago, in Germany, of a plaster-cast alleged to be the identical mask which was moulded from the features of the poet after death, and furnished the model to the sculptor of the monument. It is stated to have been originally purchased by a German nobleman attached to an embassy to the Court of James I. of England, and brought home by him to his native country, as a memorial of the great Shakespeare. Preserved in his family as a valued relic, it descended from generation to generation, until it came into the possession of the last of his race, Count Francis von Kesselstadt, one of the canons of Cologne Cathedral. On the latter's death, in 1843, his collection of curiosities was sold and dispersed; but the cast in question was, a few years afterwards, recovered among the rubbish of a broker's shop, by Dr. Becker, who placed it in the hands of Professor Owen, in whose custody it now remains at the British Museum. It is a ghastly-looking object, though the features which it portrays

are regular and handsome; and if we accept it as a genuine cast of Shakespeare, there can be no doubt that the sculptor of the bust must have deviated considerably from his model, which represents a longer and more oval face. On the back of the mask is the inscription, "Ao.Dm., 1616."

Haliwell Phillips strangely states that the portrait of Shakespeare, engraved by Droeshout, and prefixed to the first folio edition of his plays, ranks next to the bust in point of authority; and that *a general resemblance is to be traced between them*. The same opinion has been expressed by others; but so far from perceiving the slightest similarity in these two works to each other, any experienced artist, or physiognomist, will recognise a very great difference between them, not only in general form and expression, but in every separate feature. That Droeshout's print "ranks next to the bust in point of authority," we admit in so far as it was executed close on his day; above all, we are bound to yield more than respect to the loving lines by Ben Jonson, who bequeaths us this record of its truthfulness. For grand old Ben's sake, if for no other reason, we will cling to the figure-head he endorsed :—

"This figure, that thou here seest put,
It was for gentle Shakespeare cut;
Wherein the Graver had a strife
With Nature, to out-do the life.
Oh, could he but have drawn his wit,
As well in brass as he hath hit
His face; the print would then surpass
All that was ever writ in brass.
But since he cannot, Reader, look
Not on his picture, but his book."



The Casts now in British Museum.

The wretched execution of the engraving proves that Droeshout was not only destitute of artistic talent, but, was a most "abominable imitator of humanity." He says, "The verses in praise of Droeshout's performance



were probably written as soon as they were bespoke, and before their author had opportunity or inclination to compare the plate with its original. It is lucky indeed, for those to whom metrical recommendations are necessary, that custom does not require they should be delivered on oath. It is also probable that Ben Jonson had no acquaintance with the graphic art, and might not have been over-solicitous about the style in which Shakespeare's lineaments were transmitted to posterity. The portraits of Shakespeare painted in oils do not any of them in-

crease in favour with lapse of time. Even the Chandos portrait is thought much less of now than it was half a century ago, and the others have receded in public estimation in even greater degree.

We are inclined to regard the monumental bust as the *only* authentic representation of the poet. The "Monument-maker," who doubtless was well acquainted with the features of the great author in life, and would most probably have before him a cast from the original, and also a portrait from the life to help in the work, would readily produce



We again hear dear Ben Jonson telling the world that he "loved the man, and do honour his memory, on this side idolatry, as much as any." He was, indeed, honest, and of an open and free nature." We read once more, and never in a more appropriate place, his old friend's loving lines :—

TO THE MEMORY OF
MY BELOVED THE
AUTHOR, MR.
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE, AND WHAT
HE HATH LEFT US.

To draw no envy,
Shakespeare, on
thy name,
Am I thus ample to
thy book and fame;
While I confess thy
writings to be such
As neither man, not
Muse, can praise
too much ;
'Tis true, and all
men's suffrage ;
but these ways
Were not the paths
I meant unto thy
praise ;
For seemliest ignorance
on these may
light,
Which, when it
sounds at best,
but echoes right ;
Or blind affection,
which doth ne'er
advance

a representation, making all allowance for lack of refined skill, worthy of adoption through all time. None of the paintings which have passed for original portraits possess claims to authenticity such as would be satisfactory to the discriminating critic.

Here at his tomb we love to recall all these things about the man, and experience a deep joy in knowing that his heart was as loving and lovable as his brain was mighty and marvellous. We delight also in thinking, or in reading over, what the great poets have said, in honour of their greatest brother.

The truth, but gropes, and urgeth all by chance ;
Or crafty malice might pretend this praise,
And think to ruin, where it seem'd to raise.
These are, as some infamous bawd
Should praise a matron ; what could hurt her
more ?

But thou art proof against them ; and, indeed,
Above the ill fortune of them, or the need.
I therefore will begin :—Soul of the age,
The applause, delight, the wonder of our stage ;
My Shakespeare, rise ! I will not lodge thee by
Chaucer, or Spenser ; or bid Beaumont lie
A little further, to make thee a room ;
Thou art a monument without a tomb ;
And art alive still, while thy book doth live,
And we have wits to read and praise to give.



Portion of the West Window.

That I not mix thee so, my brain excuses ;
 I mean, with great but disproportioned muses ;
 For, if I thought my judgment were of years,
 I should commit thee wisely with thy peers ;
 And tell—how far thou didst our Lyly outshine,
 Or sporting Kyd, or Marlowe's mighty line.
 And though thou hadst small Latin, and less Greek,
 From thence to honour thee, I would not seek
 For names ; but call forth thundering Æschylus,
 Euripides, and Sophocles, to us,
 Pacuvius, Accius, him of Cordova dead,
 To life again, to hear thy buskin tread
 And shake a stage ; or when thy shocks come on,
 Leave thee alone ; for the comparison
 Of all that insolent Greece or haughty Rome
 Sent forth, or since did from their ashes come.
 Triumph, my Britain ! thou hast one to show,
 To whom all scenes of Europe homage owe.
 He was not of an age, but for all time ;
 And all the muses still were in their prime,
 When, like Apollo, he came forth to warm
 Our ears ; or, like a Mercury, to charm.
 Nature herself was proud of his designs,
 And joy'd to wear the dressing of his lines ;
 Which were so richly spun, and woven so fit,
 As, since, she will vouchsafe no other wit :
 The merry Greek, tart Aristophanes,
 Neat Terence, witty Plautus, now not please :
 But antiquated and deserted lie,
 As they were not of Nature's family.
 Yet must I not give Nature all ; thy art,
 My gentle Shakespeare, must enjoy a part.—
 For though the poet's matter nature be,
 His art doth give the fashion ; and that he
 Who casts to write a living line, must sweat,
 (Such as thine are) and strike a second heat
 Upon the Muse's anvil : turn the same
 (And himself with it), that he thinks to frame ;

Or for the laurel he may gain a scorn,—
 For a good poet's made, as well as born ;
 And such wert thou. Look how the father's face
 Lives in his issue ; even so the race
 Of Shakespeare's mind and manners brightly
 shines

In his well-turned and true-filed lines ;
 In each of which he seems to shake a lance,
 As brandished at the eyes of ignorance.
 Sweet Swan of Avon, what a sight it were,
 To see thee in our waters yet appear ;
 And make those flights upon the banks of
 Thames,

That so did take Eliza and our James !
 But stay ; I see thee in the hemisphere
 Advanced, and made a constellation there :—
 Shine forth, thou star of poets ; and with rage
 Or influence, chide, or cheer, the drooping stage ;
 Which, since thy flight from hence, hath mourned
 like night,
 And despairs day, but for thy volume's light.

Thus nobly England's second great
 dramatist wrote in memory of her first and
 greatest. Such golden testimony did "rare
 Ben Jonson" bear to the nature, character,
 and genius of his contemporary, his "beloved
 Mr. William Shakespeare." Standing at
 the grave in Stratford Church is a fitting
 place to read these glorious lines. There,
 indeed, we feel that he is "a monument
 without a tomb" ; that "he is still alive,
 while his book doth live, and we have wits
 to read, and praise to give." There, also,
 more fully than in any other place, do we
 realize the truth of the prophetic line, "He
 was not of an age, but for all time ;" and
 bless the memory of the brave, sturdy,
 honest, and appreciative friend who has so
 poetically given voice to our best and
 highest admiration of England's chiefest
 child of song.

Nor must we forget Milton's noble epitaph.
 The large-hearted Puritan found *his* Pantheon
 large enough to admit Chaucer, and Spenser,
 and the writers of

"wicked" plays.
 He did not scruple
 to confess how
 much he had
 learned from
 Spenser : he knew
 that "the lofty,
 grave tragedians,
 are the teachers
 best of moral pru-
 dence" ; and in
 memory of the
 greatest of these
 lofty, grave tra-
 gedians, the writer
 of England's if



not the world's most noble epic thus wrote :—

What need my Shakespeare for his hallow'd bones
The labours of an age in sculptured stones?
Or that his hallow'd reliques should be hid
Beneath a starry-pointed pyramid?
Dear son of memory, great heir of fame,
What need'st thou such weak witness of thy name?
Thou in our wonder and astonishment
Hast built thyself a livelong monument.
For whilst, to the shame of slow-endavouring art,
Thy easy numbers flow ; and that each heart

Hath, from the leaves of thy unvalued book,
Those Delphic lines with deep impression took ;
There thou, our fancy of itself bereaving,
Does make us marvel with too much conceiving :
And so sepulchred in such pomp does lie,
That kings, for such a tomb, would wish to die.

And here also it is fitting to produce Edmund Spenser's reference, who, in his "Tears of the Muses," after lamenting the decline of poetry, thus writing :—

And he, the man whom Nature self had made
To mock herself, and
truth to imitate,
With kindly counter, under
mimic shade,
Our pleasant Willy, ah !
is dead of late :
With whom all joy and
jolly merriment
Is also deaded, and in
dolour drent.

Instead thereof scoffing
Scurrility,
And scorning Folly, with
Contempt, is crept,
Rolling in rhymes of
shameless ribaldry,
Without regret or due
decorum kept ;
Each idle wit at will pre-
sumes to make,
And doth the Learned's
task upon him take.

But that same gentle spirit,
from whose pen
Large streams of honey
and sweet nectar flow,
Scorning the boldness of
such base-born men,
Which dare their follies
forth so rashly throw,
Doth rather choose to sit
in idle cell,
Than so himself to mockery
to sell.

It has been the fashion of those who affect superior wisdom by the constant exercise of incredulity, to doubt Spenser's reference. The seeker after truth will recognise that, although the poem was written before Shakespeare's death, yet the allusion was figurative, and his temporary retirement from dramatic authorship only was meant. The love of personal abuse had driven out real comedy, and there was one who, for a brief season, had ^{run} the madness to take its course.

On the Sabbath morn on which we were accompanied by Ralph Waldo Emerson and his interesting daughter to worship in Holy



Trinity, we sat in the chancel stalls, on the south side, that our friends might get good view of the bust. Outside, gentle breezes blew, and the tall trees bowed all their foliage, bending and rustling like dames of fashion; spots of sunlight and shade were thrown on to the windows; and inside, the priest prayed, and the choir, ranged in front of the organ, sang.

We were just opposite the monument. There were the two plump cherubs, the hideous skull, the coat armour, the spear on a bend; for granting which armour to the poet's father, Garter King-at-Arms is erroneously said to have got into trouble. For our part, we fancied Shakespeare joining in the prayers, word for word, as we did. We fancied we saw that round bald head, with the curled chestnut locks at the side, bowed in one of the pews. We fancied that his observant eye noted every peculiarity of priest and people. And when the preacher mounted the pulpit the well-known words, "parson's saw" — "coughing drowns the parson's saw" — somehow ran in our minds. Summer vanished, and a vision of cold stones in the February afternoon, somewhere about the Year of Grace, 1610, of many in church anxious to hear of the New Place pew and the man in it, of that man's amusement at the saw and the coughing; and, thought we, as we looked at the bust,—What impression did it make on you, you open-eyed one? You were humorous, tender, and sympathetic. Did you have a general feeling for the poor parson, or for the poor people? Or did your good condition and New Place and

King James's complimentary letter fill your head? And did you feel rather proud and self-content? Did you feel the great man in Stratford—William Shakespeare? Did you recollect you were the rescuer and rebuilder of your family, or did you call to mind the time when your father sat in the



The North Transept.



Corporation pew as alderman; or when he was turned out for poverty, and got into the back benches? What a man you were, William Shakespeare, never to fill your writings, as our modern people do, with your own selfish aspirations, wishes, and dreams.

You looked at others, and *put down what you saw*. But perhaps you never had any high aspirations for yourself! Yet you must

have had the harmony "of immortal souls" you speak of, which we cannot hear; and found that, as you say, "the smallest orb in heaven sings like an angel; though whilst his muddy vesture of decay doth grossly close us in, we cannot hear it." Oh, Shakespeare, we are constrained to hope, nay, to firmly believe, that *sack* did *not* kill you, and that you were not so much a man amongst men as to have lost the diviner, more unpopular, stern saintliness, which fits for heaven!

So our thoughts maundered along, and our eye fixed itself more firmly on the monument, till it seemed almost to acquire life beneath our gaze. There in the monument, we seemed to see a pulpit, cushion, and the manuscript sermon—even the pen. The great preacher's moustache was too wiry for a parson, but the stolid rigidity of the figure was by no means unlike many a worthy expounder we have seen. All the time from the real pulpit came the flashy stream of a discourse, but we thought it was the stone that spoke. Pardon our straying, silly mind, O great one, for the follies that it dreamed that thou didst utter!

"All people should be good," said the bust. "All should be gentle and kind, for the world is a wicked and queer place. I had a good surfeit of its follies, and the very motives of men were not hidden from me."

"Great men and little men—all puppets, playing little plays—the king to the beggar all march off the stage when the curtain falls."

"You people in your time are full of conceit with yourselves. You're just what people were in my day."

"In my time I saw many sorts of men, and looked them through. They bred me amongst wool-dealers and thriving burgesses. Then we went downhill in life. I wandered to the big city; knew actors and actresses and great lords too. Wearied and worn I came back to my dear native Stratford; and my writings were liked and admired because I copied men and women as they were. Yes! you admired what I wrote because I copied them. Time to end? Yes. What is my moral?"

"Be real! Follow me not; I was no saint. But follow me in this—be real!"

"But," we remonstrated, "Will Shakespeare, speaking in church is not allowed, we know, but how you would have despised the upstarts, the purse-proud rascals of our time! How you would have seen with

disdain the richest bankers and brewers and manufacturers turned into nobles for no other reason than that they had acquired so much of gain! How you would have scorned the trash of money! Don't you know how you said, 'Who steals my purse, steals trash'? We want you to help our age. We want you to make us think more of eternity, and more of God's greatness and man's littleness. Oh, had we your wide deep knowledge of human nature—what would it do for us?"

We thought the face smiled and then seemed sad. The lips said, "Money, trash! Yes, it was a noble sentiment! but you

pulpit and said, "Did he preach?" "Who? Shakespeare?" said we. "Yes!"

There is a monument on the north side corner of the great east window of deep interest on account of its connection with Shakespeare, and executed by the same sculptor as his own, to the memory of his friend, John Combe. He is said to have been a money-lender, and the story runs that he asked Shakespeare to write his epitaph, the severity of which the miser is said never to have forgiven. But the same thought may be found in different shapes in literature long before Shakespeare's time, and there is probably but little truth in the



know I did not conform my life to my best thoughts. I did see much to make me weep and smile in human folly, but to despise upstarts was not in my way. No; I could have painted them for you."

"God is great and man is little. Yes; but my knowledge of human nature will not help me to force this on your age or on any age. I could not force it on myself! Listen to that other preacher there!"

We awoke from a reverie with a start, and we heard—

"What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? What our companion in the adjoining chancel stall thought all this time we know not; he had continued, as it were, in a trance; but as he took our arm he looked at the

tradition, as we find John Combe leaving by his will five pounds to Shakespeare.

The common version of the epitaph is given by Aubrey:—

"Ten in the hundred lies here ingraved:
'Tis a hundred to ten his soul is not saved.
If any man ask who lies in this tomb?
Oh! oh! quoth the devil, 'tis my John a Combe."

This squib epigram is really nothing more than an adoption of one written upon some other money-lender before him, and as applied to him is a distinct and palpable forgery. The point, however, is lost on many who do not see the desired pun, which is made possible by rustic pronunciation. The devil is supposed to say—

"'Tis my John has come, ha' come—a Combe."

The tolling of the bell at the passing away of any man, woman, or child, and which was practised in and long after Shakespeare's time, may, we trust, at no distant day be revived at Holy Trinity, Stratford being the place of all others to lend additional solemnity to the custom. Albeit of Romish origin, nothing can be more solemn than the *passing* or *souls' bell*, called because it rings for someone then passing from life, and invites all who hear it, whether in the crowded street, or in the midst of their business, to pray for the soul then departing to another world. Talk of sermons! what sermon more deeply or impressively eloquent was ever delivered, than by the iron tongue which tolls suddenly out, to all within its hearing, that the most awful event, the departure of an immortal soul into another world, is at that moment taking place, close by? What more impressive preacher than the solemn bell, which from its tower, as from a lofty pulpit, proclaims to a busy, bustling, jostling crowd, in the midst of their toils and cares, the vanity of the pursuits in which they are absorbed.

Plato says in the "Dialogues," that the soul, being an emanation from above, like a bird escaping from its cage, the moment it gets free from this body, mounts aloft to its native sphere or element. God only knows; Plato, or even the almost Christian Socrates, are but poor guides in these matters, though the idea is a pure and elevated one for a Pagan. It is even now the custom amongst the peasants in certain primitive districts in Ireland to leave the window of the room in which a person is dying open; that there be nothing for an instant to intercept the free egress of the soul in its flight to Heaven. Amongst the Romans, when persons were at the point of death, the nearest relation present attempted to catch the last breath with his or her mouth; for they believed that the soul or living principle (*anima*) then went out at the mouth; thus in the 4th Æneid, Anna exclaims over the expiring Dido—

"Et, extremus si quis super halitus errat
Ore legam."

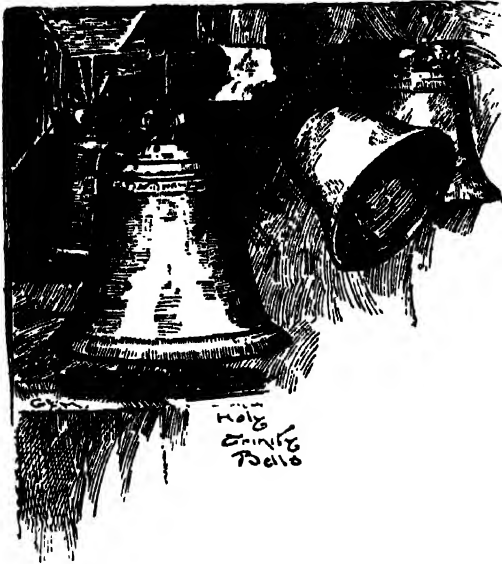
Of yore, not far distant from the time when the passing bell struck on Shakespeare's ear, there was likewise in Holy Trinity Church, the Sanctus, or Holy Bell, which derived its title from being rung when the priest came to the words, "*Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus, Domine, Deus Sabaoth*;" it was so placed that the rope hung close to the altar, convenient to the hand; it was audible at a

considerable instance, and those who heard it were expected to fall on their knees in reverence to the holy office then going on in the

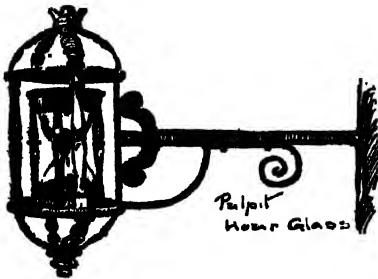


Church. Reader! should it ever fall to your lot for the Angel of Death, through Stratford-on-Avon Holy Trinity Passing Soul's Bell, to

sound on your ear the gathering a grain into the Everlasting Garner, you will on that spot probably realize a sense of immortality of the soul rarely extended to human imagination.



Holy Trinity, like the old Greek and Roman orators, who were wise in their generation, had a tell-tale hour-glass set up in their midst, conspicuously placed aloft by the preacher's side, so that all might see as well as hear, and which served as a standard that neither minister nor congregation should disregard. It is said to have been a duplicate of one then existing in Coventry, as sketched. It was no paltry



article, and we find it recorded in the Chamberlains' accounts that a sum of money was paid for "setting up the hour-glass," but no trace of the instrument's cost is found. Its value and need were well recognised by Stratford burghers. It prevented the preacher from delivering less than his full tale of bricks, and also it enabled the congregation to know that when the sand had run out,

their hour of penance was over, and they could go home to their dinners with an easy conscience. Of course, it would not necessarily follow that the whole hour should be used, any more than it was in the days of St. Augustine or Latimer, whose sermons often did not exceed ten minutes. The glass gave an outside limit, and was a curb on babbling tongues. Shaw, in his illustrations of the Middle Ages, gives an engraving of one richly set in jewels. These Church hour-glasses were in use in Cromwell's time. The preacher, on giving out the text, turned up the glass, and if the sermon did not hold out, it was said by the congregation, who then, as now, looked for money's full worth, that the preacher was lazy. If he exceeded his hour, they would yawn and stretch, and by other insulting signs give their pastor to understand that he was abusing his privilege. The pew occupied by Shakespeare was in full view of the pulpit, and as the representation of plays was then regulated by the hour-glass, we may be sure he was not a careless observer of the symbolic rapid glides of the sparse sands of life.

Whether any hour-glass warned the preacher at the Guild Chapel there is no record, though it is beyond tradition that Shakespeare frequently attended service there, as is said, at the afternoon service; its immediate proximity to New Place rendered it almost his domestic chapel.

The ruling powers of Stratford in Shakespeare's time were the Lucys, the Cloptons, and the Combes. The vicar was the next leader of the then society of the place; the bailiff came next, and then followed the aldermen and burgesses of the borough. The Cloptons could hardly be regarded as residents; they went hither and thither, but were rarely absent, for any length of time, save on occasions when blocked by unpassable roads. The Lucys, save during sessions of Parliament, were always at Charlecote, though holding their noses above any of the Stratford people, except the Cloptons, whom they occasionally visited; but it was only occasional. The Combes, too, scented the air with noses upturned, and so were pretty much left to themselves to take care of themselves. Neither of these three families mixed themselves up in the corporate affairs of the borough to the extent of taking office, though each indirectly held power through nominee aldermen and other officials. There was marked separateness between the three families, and a good deal

of jealousy between the Lucys and the Cloptons.

John and Mary Shakespeare held a somewhat anomalous position on her arrival in Stratford as his wife. Mary was of much better family than any of the butcher or tailor aldermen, all of whom had wives from their own class, and could hardly be expected to embosom herself with these, though in common with gentle birth she would carry herself towards all as a lady. Prior to and several years after his marriage, all went well with John Shakespeare; his acquisition of worldly means through Mary added to his influence, but it would appear that the Lucys set their foot on any further advancement, Mary's family being by the Charlecote Knight regarded as of Papist tendencies. The big man of the Hall was a noted bigot in religion, and insisted upon it that the Ardens were traitors and nothing else, and



HILLFIELD HALL.

must not be permitted to take rank, or hold influence possible of usage against the other side. There existed not the smallest truth for the Knight's prejudices; they were utterly devoid of fairness, and therefore more grievous to those who were made sufferers therefrom. Lucy was not to be gainsaid, and the result at the moment was the creation of two parties, the Cloptons and Combes usually siding with the Shakespeares against the Lucy faction in their combination to decry and injure them. It is easily understood how, in such a town as Stratford, a man could be what was then known as "kept down" by the prominent landowners and others sedulously acting to crush them. John Shakespeare was an energetic man, and held his own for many years against the common enemy; but there came a limit to

his endurance, and it looked as though Fortune's frowns could not be withstood.

But a brighter day was at hand; the young William was growing up, and was destined to render far more than the joyful aid God had vouchsafed to place within his power even in days of boyhood. Whether derived from usage of his brains by a Stratford attorney, or by the adaptation of plays to State usages, or through both, is unknown.

It is enough to know that honestly-earned coin flowed into his purse when he could have been little more than a boy. This reward of his marvellously fertile creative power of literature at a moment when men's minds were awakening to its beauties, was joyfully devoted to prevent his father being crushed under the iron heel of fanatical puritans. These formed a strong aldermanic phalanx, headed by Sir Justice Shallow, and, as the Corporation accounts testify, they mellowed themselves with plenteous draughts of sack at public expense, on occasions of meeting to discuss their acts of oppression of those of higher charity than themselves. The Ardens had the blood of gentlefolk, and bore meekly the bitterness of the low-born, whose delight was in endeavours to bring them down to their own level.

Certain it is that soon after their son William had established himself in London, a great change occurred in their position towards the Lord of Charlecote and his aiding and abetting aldermen. At the time of the poet's securing a considerable income in London, the position of the three reigning families of Stratford may fairly be thus described. Before William Shakespeare acquired any property in his native place, the heiress of the Cloptons married George Carew, a soldier of great eminence in Ireland, created in 1605 Baron Carew of Clopton, and in 1608 promoted by King James to the high and distinguished office of Master of the Ordnance to the King. Old John Combe, the usurer, as he is called, but who was anything but the blood-sucker represented, was the Esquire of Stratford during Shakespeare's time, and kept himself out of the lines and inveiglement of the Lucys and Cloptons; in fact, he was on the side of "Gentle Will," and being a man of straightforward word and action, did not shrink from avowing it.

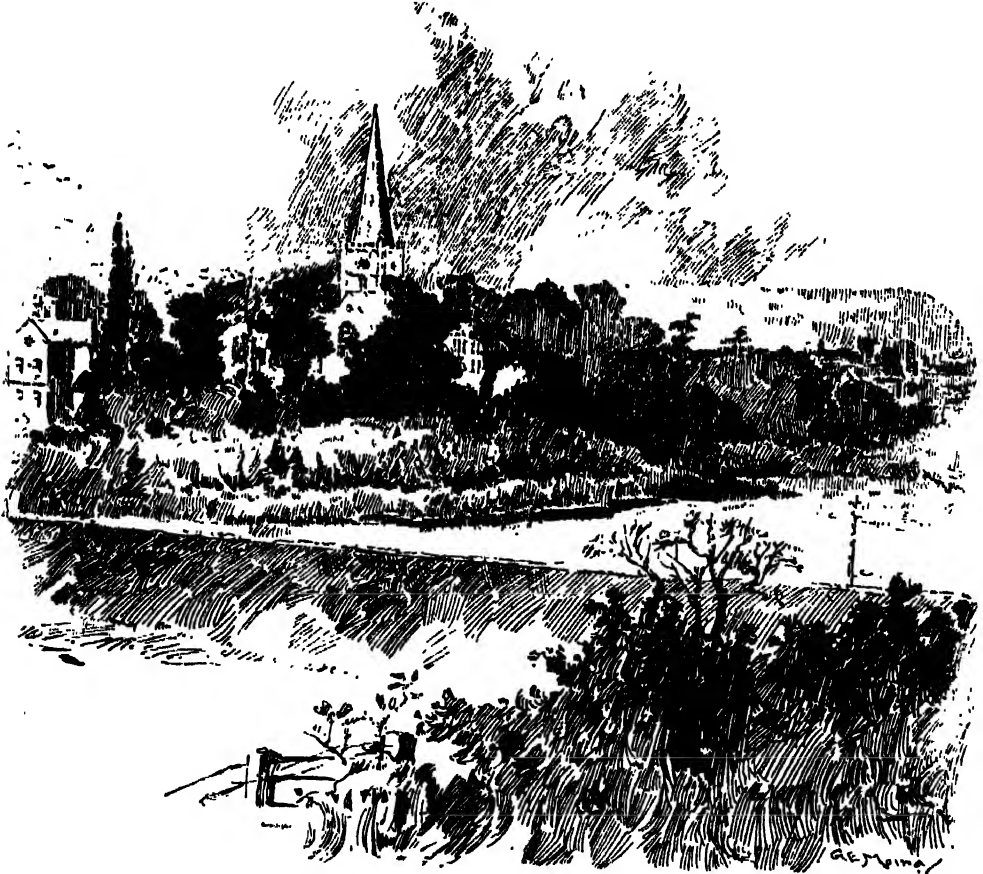
Class distinctions in Stratford were as marked then as ever. Holy Trinity settles this fact beyond all cavil through monumental illustrations of that day. The Clop-

tons sleep alone and apart in a chapel of their own near the north transept, the Combes close to the altar, and the Shakespeares before the altar. These are the only monuments of what may be called aspiring families in the church. Old Sir Hugh Clopton, who built the bridge over the Avon, was buried in the Church of St. Margaret, Lothbury, in London. His grand-nephew, William Clopton, was buried in the Clopton Chapel, in 1592, and William Clopton's wife, in the same chapel, in 1596. Their only surviving child, a daughter named Joyce, married Sir George

after the great fire in Stratford, and, as is asserted, through sorrow and vexation of his property having been licked up of fire. Shakespeare has the credit of an epitaph thus upon him:—

"Ten in the hundred the Devil allows;
But Combe will have twelve he swears and he
vows,
Many one asks, Who lies in this tomb?
Ho! quoth the Devil, 'tis my John a Combe."

It is remarkable that John Combe's monument was executed by the same sculptor, Gerard Johnson, the sculptor who carved



Traditioned as a favourite spot of frequent visit by the Poet.

Carew, created Baron Carew of Clopton by King James I., and Earl of Totnes by King Charles I. He had no issue by his wife, so that his titles became extinct. He was the author of a well-known work, *Pacata Hibernia*.

The Combes lie clinging as it were to the horns of the altar. Of Combe himself there is a recumbent figure on an altar tomb. He died on the 10th of July, 1614, the very day

the head of Shakespeare on his monument. The probability is that Shakespeare introduced him. The fact of Jansen having been employed in both cases is confirmatory of his high estimate with the several families.

Of the many goodly vicars who, since the great Poet's day, have held charge of Stratford's Hallowed Fane, one was permitted its custody for nearly half a century. "The

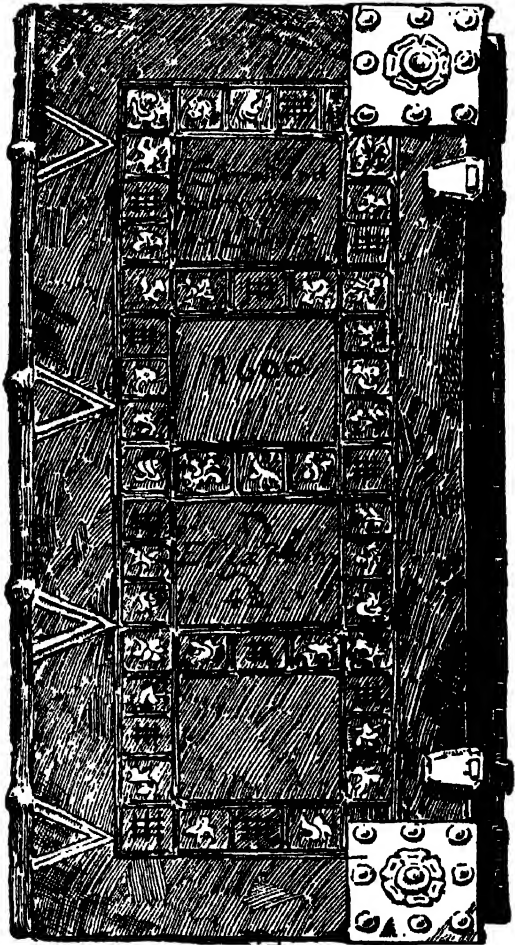
children of the mist " believed, in their wild romantic imaginations, that when one of their tribe died, his soul hovered about the place where he loved to dwell in life. It is not out of character to believe that this sacred pile should have attractions for a spirit which so long laboured there, or for the great spirit of him who sought within its holy precincts the rest and joy and peace he so greatly needed after his laborious professional toils in London. Homer represents Nestor as having survived several "generations of articulating men," whom he had seen pass before him; but what generations must a minister who spent fifty years in this Holy Trinity of Stratford have outlived? He saw the same men pass almost through Shakespeare's seven ages, and illustrate them all; have looked upon the baby brow which he sprinkled at the baptismal font, until it became wrinkled with years and cares; have joined many a smiling pair on a sunlight morning in marriage, while the merry peals rang above their heads, and read the glorious and comforting service over the same to the solemn sounds of the passing bell. The experience of such a pastor, his lines cast in such a spot, seeing and knowing so much of the interior of the same individual lives, and the workings of human nature, with all its vicissitudes; the death-bed of poverty, and apathy, and affluent prudence (when both prudence and affluence seem hollow possessions) would form a volume of practical and often painful knowledge.

One of the Holy Trinity windows formerly bore this inscription:—"Thomas Balshall, Doctor of Divinity, re-edified this quier, and died, Anno 1491."

THE PARISH REGISTER

Of Holy Trinity Church is one of the most precious volumes in existence; happily none in the world has been better guarded and cared for. It is a book of considerable thickness, the leaves formed of very fine vellum, and which contains the entries of Baptisms, Marriages, and Burials. The Register commences with the record of a baptism, on the 25th of March, 1558. All the entries, whether of Baptisms, Marriages, or Burials, are without exception in the same handwriting, from the first entry, to September 14, in the year 1600. But although the register is thus only a transcript for forty-two years, its authenticity and perfect correctness is beyond all realm of cavil: each page is signed by Richard Bifield, the

vicar, and four churchwardens, in attestation of its being a correct copy. Ah, Bifield, thou wert indeed a painstaking son of the Church, a worthy occupant of the vicarial office, and the world owes thee much for thy exactitude! Had there been more of thy stamp of mind, the domestic history of England could be much more clearly written. Richard Bifield was vicar of Stratford from 1596 to 1610; and to him we are, in all



*The Parish Register
Holy Trinity*

probability, indebted for this transcript of the original registers, which were most likely on loose leaves of paper. Subsequently, the Registers are not made at the time of the performance of the Church office. They generally appear to be entered monthly; but sometimes the transcript seems to have been made at longer intervals.

The signatures of the Churchwardens of the year is then affixed to each page as a testimonial of its accuracy.

There are then entries of Ursula, 1588; Humphrey, 1590; Philippus, 1591;—children of John Shakspeare (not *Mr.*).

It appears by the Register of Burials, that Dr. Hall, Shakespeare's son-in-law, was buried

The children of Judith, who was only married two months before the death of her father, appear to have been three sons, all of whom died before their mother.

The Register is full of entries of baptisms and deaths in the Shakespeare family, the most important, of course, being—"Baptisms, 1564, April 26. Gulielmus filius Johannis Shakespere."

Blessed privilege, dear old Trinity, to hold in thy bosom such a priceless treasure! What jewelled casket of the richest of the world's nobles can be compared in value with this venerable register? which has been cared for to the very utmost by the loving hands that, through so many generations, have been entrusted with its guardianship. It is in the most perfect preservation, the more extraordinary seeing that thousands of persons are every year permitted to handle it. Ay! and he was worthy of the motherly care given to this his baptismal record, for against Shakespeare the strictest orthodoxy has never brought a single charge. Yet if ever there was a man who questioned fate, who fought "the cruel battle within," and yet remained faithful, it was Shakespeare. Never in any of his plays is there the slightest symptom of that disbelief which ends in despair and mockery. Too large-minded for any one particular creed or system, he ever treats not only religion, but all things, with the purest spirit of reverence.

Blessed be the memory of the Norman Conqueror, who commanded a register of the lands of England to be completed, with the names of their possessors, and the number of their free tenants, their villains, and their slaves. In the sixteenth century, Thomas Cromwell, as the Vice-Regent of Henry VIII. for ecclesiastical jurisdiction, issued injunctions to the clergy, ordaining, amongst other matters, that every officiating minister shall, for every church, keep a book, wherein he shall register every marriage, christening, or burial. Truly has Charles Knight expressed the effect in saying: "In the different character of these two registers we read what five centuries of civilization had effected for England. Instead of being recorded in the gross as *colarii* or *servii*, the meanest labourer, his wife, and his children had become children of their country and their country's religion, as much as the highest lord and his family. Their names were to be inscribed in a book and carefully preserved. But the people doubted the intent of this wise and liberal injunction. A



Formerly in Holy Trinity.

on the 26th November, 1635. He is described in the entry as "Medicus peritissimus." The Register contains no entry of the burial of Thomas Quiney. Elizabeth, the daughter of John and Susanna Hall, was baptized on February 21, 1607 [1607-8]; and is mentioned in her illustrious grandfather's will.

friend of Cromwell writes to him: "There is much secret and several communications between the King's subjects: and [some] of them, in sundry places within the shires of Cornwall and Devonshire, be in great fear and mistrust, what the King's Highness and Council should mean, to give in commandment to the parsons and vicars of every parish that they should make a book, and surely to be kept, wherein to be specified the names of as many as be wedded, and the names of them that be buried, and of all those that be christened.' They dreaded new 'charges'; and well they might dread. But Thomas Cromwell had not regal exactions in his mind. The registers were at first imperfectly kept; but the regulation of 1538 was strictly enforced in the first year of Elizabeth; and then the register of the parish of Stratford-upon-Avon commences, that is, in 1558.

"Venerable book! Every such record of human life is a solemn document. Birth, marriage, death!—this is the whole history of the sojourn upon earth of nearly every name inscribed in these mouldy, stained, blotted pages. And after a few years what is the interest, even to their own descendants, of these brief annals? With the most of those for whom the last entry is still to be made, the question is, Did they leave property? Is some legal verification of their possession of property necessary?"

'No further seek their merits to disclose.'

"But there are entries in this venerable register of Holy Trinity that are interesting to universal mankind. We have all received a precious legacy from one whose progress from the cradle to the grave is here recorded—a bequest large enough for all, and for all who will come after us."

The old record, which solemnly declares to the world that Shakespeare was baptised on the 26th of April, 1564, is now marked with three crosses to call attention to it. The date of the year and the word April occur three lines above the entry, the baptism being the fourth registered in that month, and one of fifty-five which occurred in the same year. But this book is only a transcript, attested by the vicar and four churchwardens on every page of the registers from 1558 to 1600; the record is, therefore, only a copy of the original entry, made at a time (1600) when Shakespeare was a person of sufficient importance in Stratford to make it desirable to be accurate in the dating, if not in the Latin.

It is not a little singular that a whole host of Welshmen were living in Stratford during Shakespeare's time. The Church register discloses sundry Ap Williams, Ap Edwards, Hugh Ap Shon, Ap Roberts, Ap Howell, Evans Meredith, Evans Rice and other undoubted Cymric worthies as fellow-townsmen of the poet. He had, therefore, from infancy ample opportunities of becoming acquainted with the dialect as well as character of the Welsh people. The two



Welshmen, Fluellen in "Henry V.," and Sir Hugh Evans in the "Merry Wives," prove his intimate acquaintance with the national peculiarities.

Every loving pilgrim should, if possible, attend a service in the Holy Shrine. The eloquent American preacher, Ward Beecher, thus records his experience of a service in this more than hallowed temple:—"I am so ignorant of the church service that I cannot call the various parts by their right names; but the portions which most affected

me were the prayers and responses which the choir sang. I had never heard any part of a supplication—a direct prayer—*chanter* by a choir; and it seemed as though I heard not with my ear but with my soul. I was dissolved; my whole being seemed to me like an incense wafted gratefully toward God. The Divine presence rose before me in wondrous majesty, but of ineffable gentleness and goodness, and I could not stay away from more familiar approach, but seemed irresistibly, yet gently drawn toward God. My soul, then thou didst magnify the Lord, and rejoice in the God of thy salvation! I stood like a shrub in a spring morning—every leaf covered with dew, and every breeze shook down some drops. I trembled so much at times, that I was obliged to sit down. Oh, when in the prayers, breathed forth in strains of sweet, simple, solemn music, the love of Christ was recognised, how I longed then to give utterance to what that love seemed to me! There was a moment in which the heavens seemed opened to me: and I saw the glory of God! All the earth seemed to me a storehouse of images, made to set forth the Redeemer, and I could scarcely be still from crying out. I never knew, I never dreamed before, of what heart there was in that word *Amen*. Every time it swelled forth and died away solemnly, not my lips, not my mind, but my whole being said—Saviour, so let it be."

In saying farewell, so far as these pages are concerned, to Holy Trinity, the words of Thomas à Kempis, "*qui multum peregrinantur raro sanctificantur*," with all due deference to the holy man who penned them, in an intended signification of "those who go much about get little good," are here reversed. Not the least happy association clinging to the venerable shrine is the knowledge that since the day on which the world's poet was laid in its chancel tomb, God has endowed it with unbroken sequence of goodly vicars, men who have felt the sacred charge specially falling to them as ministers in God's Church. One and all have realized that their responsibility does not end with this world, that their earthly Diocesan is not the only one they have to please; that there is a bishop above and a visitation to come at which they shall be held answerable for the opportunities of reminding pilgrim visitors, to be henceforward each year increasingly swollen by thousands, of the solemn truths enforced through his works. The whole world will

vie in furnishing each its contingent to the gathering stream; and as education makes Shakespearean readers of our own masses, these, too, will join the throng of devotees. Our well-to-do tourists will feel ashamed of foreign wanderings, whilst the Shakespeare country has failed to awaken their interest. Stratford will become a centre from which cultured pilgrims will radiate to Snitterfield, Wilmcote, Shotton, and the villages identified with him, circling around it. The present occupant of Holy Trinity See, for the writer elevates it becomingly to this distinction, is not unmindful of this feature of duty, and is removed above adulatory incense.



No homage paid to his eloquence can spoil the humility of his heart. Congratulate him not on the power or beauty of a discourse, or like Massillon, he may retort: "*The devil has already told me so, with a tongue more eloquent than yours!*" Inquire not the source of support and maintenance of a school which gives education to the choir boys so eminently contributory to the beauty and holiness of the service, or you risk being regarded as an emissary of the evil one.

There is gentleness and touchingly forcible admonition to Christian toleration from Holy Trinity's pulpit. The great preacher, whose dust lies in yon chancel,

enforces the truth of Christian charity in language unapproachable :

" Could great men thunder
As Jove himself does, Jove would ne'er be quiet ;
For every pelting, petty officer
Would use his heaven for thunder: nothing but
thunder."

—*Measure for Measure*, act ii., scene 2.

Pilgrims blessed in a trance of worship in Holy Trinity can get no harm in realizing that the spirit of the great Master hovers about its holy precincts, and is present with the worshippers in its services.

From that pulpit is preached how beautifully superior, how beneficently beamed out the divine character in the rebuke of the Saviour: " Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of, for the Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to *save* them."

With the endeared sounds of thy sweet bells on our ear, we utter this farewell to dear old Trinity. We have heard their joyous wedding peals as their solemn voice in welcoming the dead to their rest from labour. Never can we forget being accidentally one of a tiny congregation composed of the minister and sexton, to welcome the cold clay of an aged brother who had, in the parish workhouse, yielded up his spirit, and whom the Church, through her surpassingly grand Liturgy, blessedly took to her arms with the same motherly love and tenderness,—whatever the allotted condition may have been whilst sojourning its little day of probation on earth—as if he had passed away a kingmaker from Warwick's lordly castle. Lazarus was no longer " lying at the gate "; his spirit had flown to its rest without having to render up account of responsibilities of the " trash money." The pauper's body had been wheeled to the gateway of God's Acre by fellow-inmates of the poorhouse. Two aged fellow-habitors, and the female nurse who had received his last breath, followed as mourners. The officiating minister on this chill afternoon received his charge bare-headed, grandly heading our little procession from the outer gate of the churchyard through Holy Trinity Western Entrance, proclaiming the Almighty as " the Resurrection and the Life, and that whosoever believeth in Him shall never die." The earthly clay, yet garbed of the world's humblest, was reverently laid on the tresselled bier, and the remainder of the sublime

service conducted with a solemnity unsurpassed in Westminster's Royal Abbey on any of its most august occasions.

The Guild Chapel bells have in the curfew, as for death knells, served jointly with Holy Trinity. Its great and small bell are thus graven :—

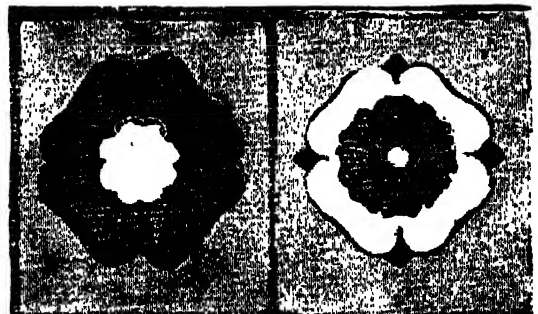


Careful examination of Holy Trinity Voices thus unfolds their historical record tales :—

HOLY TRINITY BELLS.

- 1st.—Queen Victoria's Jubilee, 1887.
- 2nd.—God Save the Queen, 1887.
- 3rd.—H. Bagley made in 1742, William Dyde, Thomas Badger, churchwardens.
- 4th.—Mathew Bagley made mee, 1683.
- 5th.—Mikell Evitt, Sam Tombs, church wds. Rs., 1733. Recast, 1887.
- 6th.—John Wakefield and Thomas Spiers, churchwardens, 1683. Recast, 1887.
- 7th.—John Taylor and John Hont, churchwardens, 1683.
- 8th.—John Cooks, Richard Goode,* Avery Edwards, Richard Spiers, 1717.

In the chapter on the Guild Chapel, mention has been made of the Master, the Rev. R. S. De Courcey Laffan's important discovery of two frescoes, sketches of which are here given. We may feel assured that when studying lessons, the poet's eye oft times



rested on these rude representations of the White and Red Rose, which had caused the shedding of so much of the best blood of England. Who shall say they were not the first cause of inspirations leading to the production of his glorious historical tragedies ?

* " E " cut in the metal after casting. 8



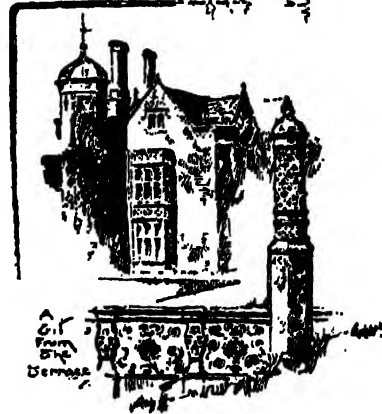
THE LUCYS, CHARLECOTE
HALL AND NEIGHBOURHOOD.



CHARLECOTE
Park, the deer-stealing story and the name of Lucy, must ever be connected with the early life of Shakespeare, according to his gossip biographers, as the first overt act of his dawning manhood. The most unreasonable tradition respecting the

great poet is that of his having been brought before Sir Thomas Lucy for deer-stealing from Charlecote Park.

The deer-stealing story runs thus:—Shakespeare having become connected with a company of wild young men, joined them in a poaching expedition, for the purpose of capturing the deer belonging to Sir Thomas Lucy. The poet, it is alleged, was caught in the very act, and it being then night, was conveyed to the keeper's lodge in the neighbourhood, whence, after being detained in durance vile till morning, he was conducted to the worshipful presence of Sir Thomas at Charlecote Hall. The punishment inflicted, if any, has never been told, so that at the very threshold the story breaks down. Shakespeare's choler being roused, he is said to have affixed to the park-gate a stinging pasquinade on Sir Thomas in the form of a ballad. As against the truth of the story, we should remember that Sir Thomas was the most important resident of Stratford vicinity, mixing freely among its citizens, and prior to Shakespeare leaving Stratford for London; some soothing of bitterness would appear to have been brought about between the Puritan knight and the Shakespeare family, as he was chosen arbitrator in a matter of dispute by Hamnet Sadler, the friend of Shakespeare; and close on the period named, he was elected member for the county of Warwick.



Only recently has there been a disposition to take a sensible view of this pretended deer-stealing matter. The tradition was generally accepted for truth. Now, however, the judgment of recent times rejects it as utterly inconsistent with the poet's devotion to study, and as equally foreign to his quiet orderly habits. There is a version of the story which may be accepted by such as do not care to be bereft altogether of so long-accepted and romantic a slander, without dimming the glory of the poet, and without fixing the shadow of reproach on Sir Thomas Lucy, still less to attach the slightest stigma to any descendant of the family, who to their honour have, from Shakespeare's day, becomingly maintained their dignity as possessors of this ancient estate, administering hospitality, and deservedly enjoying the respect of all the country round about

Thomas, and that the scurrilous verses imputed to him were written when deeply incensed. Had he gone to his grave like his fellow-townsmen, such an incident would have been forgotten, but when he rose to be the foremost prince of literature, and when, after death, his greatness dawned upon the world, incidents of early life would be seized upon, and as generation after generation told the tales, proneness to exaggeration added something from time to time, and disguised the simple original facts.

A parliemente member, a justice of peace,
At home a poor scare-crowe, at London an asse;
If lowsie is Lucy, as some volke miscall it,
Then Lucy is lowsie, whatever befall it:

He thinks himself great,
Yet an asse in his state

We allowe by his ears but with asses to mate.
If Lucy is lowsie, as some volke miscall it,
Sing lowsie Lucy, whatever befall it.



An old
House
at
Charlcoate

them. It is argued that in some hour of youthful excitement he may have trespassed either alone or with companions, beyond bounds, in pursuit of game, have been apprehended by the keepers, and brought before Sir Thomas. He may even have been arrested by mistake, and have stood before the judgment seat. Prominent throughout his works is evidence of his knowledge of all kinds of field sports, such as hunting, falconry, fishing, and even ferreting of rabbits. It is not unlikely that he himself was attached to these amusements before he entered seriously upon the grand object of his life; that on some occasion he stood charged before Sir

These lines are more remarkable for acrimony than wit; and may have been afterwards maimed and corrupted in the course of transmission.

A more refined revenge, if, indeed, revenge it can be called, was taken by Shakespeare several years afterwards on the knight, whom he has introduced and immortalized as Justice Shallow in the "Merry Wives of Windsor," with an evident allusion to his name and coat of arms:—

Shallow. Sir Hugh, persuade me not; I will make a Star-chamber matter of it: if he were twenty Sir John Falstoffs, he shall not abuse Robert Shallow, Esquire.

Slender. In the county of Gloster, justice of peace and *coram*.

Shallow. Ay, Cousin Slender, and *Cust-alorum*.

Slender. Ay, and *vatolorum* too; and a gentleman born, master parson; who writes himself *armigero*: in any bill, warrant, quittance, or obligation, *armigero*.



Charlecote Old Church.

Shallow. Ay, that we do; and have done any time these three hundred years.

Slender. All his successors, gone before him, have done't; and all his ancestors, that come after him, may; they may given the dozen white luses in their coat.

Shallow. It is an old coat.

Evans. The dozen white louses do become an old coat well; it agrees well, passant; it is a familiar beast to man, and signifies—love.

Shallow. The luce is the fresh fish; the salt fish is an old coat.

Luce is an old word for a full-grown pike, and from this the Lucys of Charlecote derives their name, bearing as arms on their shield three of these fishes. A further allusion to Charlecote and the poaching foray occurs in the same scene. Sir John Falstaff, against whom Shallow has been inveighing so loudly, enters:—

Falstaff. Now, Master Shallow; you'll complain of me to the king.

Shallow. Knight, you have beaten my men, killed my deer, and broke open my lodge.

Falstaff. But not kissed your keeper's daughter.

Shallow. Tut, a pin! this shall be answered.

Falstaff. I will answer it straight,—I have done all this; that is now answered.

Shallow. The Council shall know this.

Falstaff. 'Twere better for you if it were known in counsel: you'll be laughed at.

Fable has hitherto been made too much the basis of his biography, and by way of

contrast as many unworthy incidents as possible have been recorded of him, to make his subsequent career more remarkable. Wild inventions mark the record until life's end. All these stories are now pretty well exploded. The miracle is how in such a

limited life-period any human being could accomplish such mighty literary products as he achieved. Critics such as Coleridge and Schlegel, the latter certainly one of the most reflecting and philosophical of any age, pronounce him the most profound of all artists, and not a blind and wildly-luxuriant genius.

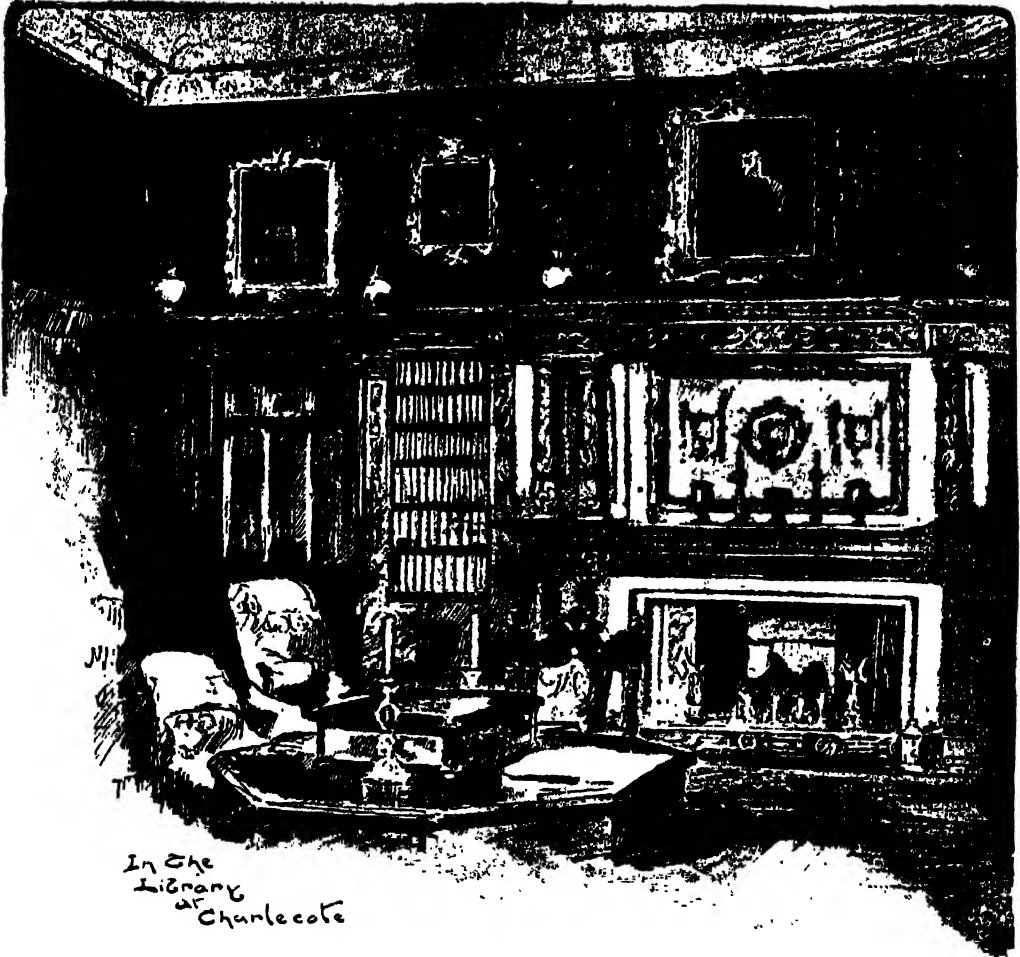
The impression left on the minds of most will warrant the belief that the poet had been a lad of spirit, of no "vinegar aspect," popular—boy, youth, and man—among his contemporaries, and taking life easy in all its stages, laughing heartily at a jest, and perfectly willing to bear his part in one. So complete and perfect are the harmony and unity of his dramatic characters, that we cannot safely derive from them any hypothesis as to the poet's dislikes and predilections; yet the humours of Eastcheap, the mad pranks of Prince Hal and his asso-



ciates, the reckless adventures of hair-brained, hot-blooded youth, are painted by the poet with such a zest as can scarcely be held otherwise than an indication of his own temperament.

It is but reasonable that Shakespeare should entertain a personal dislike of the Lucys, consequent on Puritan aversion to his mother's family; and the more so, as of all his signal and numerous opportunities to take poetical vengeance on his unfriends, that of the Lucys is the only prominent instance. That the Lucys were fond of litigation is implied by the opening lines of

passant" (that being their heraldic characteristic, twelve lucas passant). "It is a familiar beast to man and signifies—love." Excessively conical in the mouth of a Welshman! But the feud between the Lucys and the natives of Stratford was of earlier date than this story of the deer-stealing, and crops out on various occasions. The Lucys were arrogant and imperious Puritans; the good



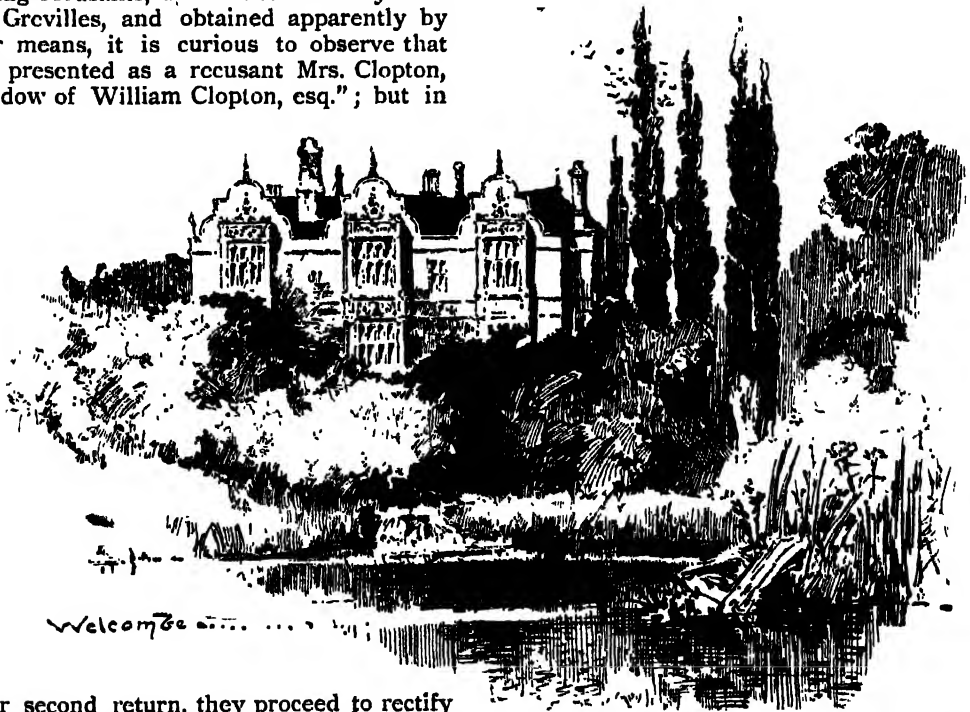
the "Merry Wives of Windsor," and justified by history. In the conversation between Shallow, Slender, and Evans, Slender says, "They may give the dozen white lucas in their coat." To which Shallow replies, "It is an old coat," evidently referring to the family pride of the Lucys, as well as their antiquity. Evans: "The dozen white louses do become an old coat well; it agrees well

town of Stratford, with the Cloptons and the Catesbys, were zealous adherents of the ancient faith. In the reign of Henry VIII. William Lucy, the father of Shakespeare's Sir Thomas, the friend of Bishop Latimer, had more than once endeavoured to bring down the King's displeasure on the citizens of Stratford for religious differences; and more than once a riot had ensued, in which the

Grevilles and the Combes, in conjunction with the Lucys, would have ridden roughshod over the burgesses, of whom Shakespeare's father was afterwards high bailiff, if they had not been supported by the Cloptons and the Catesbys, as is shown by unpublished papers in the Record Office. The Lucys were powerful at the Court of the Tudors, for they had blood royal in their veins; and as many of their opponents were Roman Catholics, or had relapsed from Protestantism to the old faith, one of their most effective instruments for satisfying personal pique, under the garb of patriotism, was to put in force the penal laws and the power of the Crown against their rivals. In a commission issued in 1592 for persecuting and presenting recusants, directed to the Lucys and the Grevilles, and obtained apparently by their means, it is curious to observe that they presented as a recusant Mrs. Clopton, "widow of William Clopton, esq."; but in

others: "It is said that the last nine come not to church for fear of process for debt."

Now, though it is true that already some six years before the date of this commission, Shakespeare's father had fallen into difficulties, and was deprived of his alderman's gown, it is hardly probable, had he been notoriously affected towards the Protestant religion, that his name would have been inserted in the return of the commissioners; for the object of the commission was not so much to learn who absented themselves from the parish church as to discover Jesuits, seminary priests and papal emissaries, now more than ever busily engaged in sowing disaffection among the people of Warwickshire and those who harboured them. The



their second return, they proceed to rectify their convenient mistake by the *malve* admission: Mrs. Clopton, presented as a recusant, was "mistaken, and goeth now to church"! In the same presentment, next to Henley-in-Arden, occurs the parish of Sombourne, with this notice: "Mrs. Mary Arden, widow, presented for a wilful recusant before our last certificate, continues still obstinate in her recusancy," and is accordingly indicted. By the same commissioners John Shakespeare, the poet's father, is returned as a recusant; but this note is subjoined in this case and in that of eight

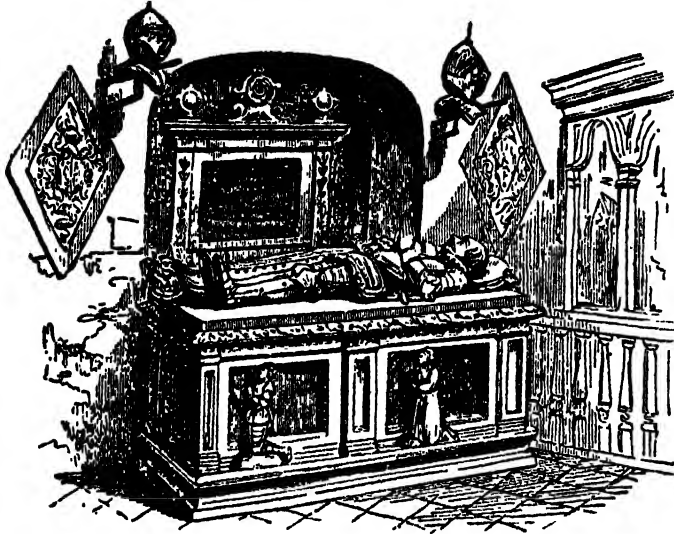
Government of the day—as is clear from the cases cited by the commissioners—required attendance at church once a month; that done, it did not trouble itself with inflicting further penalties, or requiring more distinct proofs of the recusant's loyalty. John Shakespeare was a recusant in this sense, and the note was appended to explain the reason why he had not complied with the requirements of the Government. If then he were a recusant in the ordinary use of the term, this might account for the pecuniary difficulties into which he fell some years

before, when the Government of Elizabeth exacted the fines for recusancy with unsparing severity.

In the Chancel end of Charlecote Church is the tomb of Sir Thomas Lucy and his

bettered, and hardly to be equalled by any. As she lived most virtuously, so she dyed most godly. Set down by him that best did know what hath been written to be true.

THOMAS LUCY.



Tomb of Sir Thomas Lucy in Charlecote Church.

wife. He was the squire of Charlecote mansion in Shakespeare's younger days, and has to bear all the odium tradition has heaped upon him by the story of his alleged driving the poet from Stratford.

Sir Thomas, leaving out his puritanical persecutions of the Ardens, was a good-hearted man, as the epitaph on the tomb shows. With singular good taste his name is not mentioned; but his wife's virtues are recorded in the following touching inscription:—

Here entombed lyeth the Lady Joyce Lucy, wife of Sir Thomas Lucy, of Charlecote, in the County of Warwick, Knight, daughter and heir of Sir Thomas Acton, of Sutton, in the County of Worcester, Esquier, who departed out of this wretched world to her heavenly kingdome the tenth day of February, in the year of our Lord God 1595, of her age LX. and three. All the time of her life a true and faithfull servant of her good God, never detected of any crime or vice; in religion most sound; in love to her husband most faithful and true; in friendship most constant; to what was in trust committed to her most secret; in wisdom excelling; in governing of her house, and bringing up of youth in the feare of God that did converse with her, most rare and singular. A great maintainer of hospitality; greatly esteemed of her betters; misliked of none unless of the envious. When all is spoken that can be said, a woman so furnished and garnished with virtue, as not to be

The effigies of the knight and his wife, in alabaster, lie in stately repose upon their tomb; she is in the full dress of a lady of the Elizabethan period. Moreover, above the tomb, on a marble slab recessed into the wall, is something far more interesting than mere recumbent statues. It is the epitaph Sir Thomas wrote upon his wife, who died five years before him. It tells the story of their lives, and of his love, and reveals the characters in simple, touching language.

Such a tribute to such a woman came from no pompous shallow-pated country squire. The

heart that prompted a man to write that last sentence was not one that would take delight in persecuting a lad of eighteen or twenty for trespassing, even at the cost of a few hares, or pheasants, or even a deer. There was a truly kind heart, we may almost say a noble soul. It does

not follow that because he wrote "Hamlet" and "King Lear" in his maturer years that he might not have been somewhat of a scapegrace in his youth, and we who have read these plays regard their author from a very different point of view from that taken by a country gentleman who had suffered annoyance at his hands. True it



Sir Thomas Lucy.

is that in this our day, through lapse of ages, the descent from Sir Thomas Lucy to William Shakespeare is tremendous and precipitous; from William Shakespeare to Sir Thomas

Lucy the ascent then, doubtless, to the rural inhabitants of Stratford, seemed fully as great. As one roams through Charlecote Park and grounds on the one hand and the



home in which Shakespeare passed his boyhood and that from which he took his wife, this thought reigns with a deep and lively impression. Some people are apt to think of Sir Thomas hardly, as a man who oppressed the great poet in his early years. No such theory is pretended to be set up. Whatever wrong had been done, it lay against the poet's parents, and was based on Puritanical notions regarding Mary Arden's family, who were unjustly presumed to favour the old faith, and, therefore, in the Justice's belief, an enemy to the cause of his zealously espoused Protestantism.

It is well to take a boat and navigate the Avon in either direction. Far over its clear waters the graceful willows bend, kissing the sparkling stream as it flows along. Large beds of fine and richly fragrant water-lilies spread their yellow blossoms, and the blue forget-me-nots, "the flowers for happy lovers," edge the banks with their fine adornment. Islands covered with withies and thick beds of rushes frequently break the stream into two currents, where gurgling

waters make soft responses to the waving of the trees, which the mildest of breezes awakens into the sweetest melodies. Long after leaving the town, while the windings of the river bring the fine spire of the church full in view, and, resting on the oars, another and another look is taken at the glorious symbol of aspiration, ever pointing skywards, with thoughts constantly recurring to him whose honoured bones repose under its sanctifying and hallowed roof, and wonderings if he who had written such solemn and fearful descriptions of death, now beheld the pilgrimages of men to his honoured birth-place and tomb. The surrounding country, from which Shakespeare derived so much of his inspiration, belongs to the Vale of the Red Horse, so called from the gigantic figure of a horse cut in the red marl of the Edgehills, about twelve miles from Stratford. The undulating, richly-wooded surface of this portion of Warwickshire—its orchards and cornfields—its stately mansions and parks—its shady walks and rich meadows, with the silver Avon meandering through them, all present together an admirable type of English scenery. In many respects, it exhibits still the same features that it did in the days of Shakespeare, though there can be no doubt that, owing to the amelioration effected by



draining, enclosing, and improved cultivation generally, we view the bard's Fatherland at the present day under much more favourable auspices than he did.

Youthful as Shakespeare must have been when wandering amid these rural scenes, his thoughts were, on their usage, to fire the imaginations of future generations. His

expanding intellect was then looking at history to see how he could link events together, perhaps not in order of date, but in some natural usage, so as to render such in degree only imaginative, and at the same time effective, to stir the heart. It was his will to convert the epic of history into practical subservience to the dramatic. An event of but small importance in itself, had to be invested with a power and interest non-existent in the occurrence, but which subsequent mere attractive relation should yield command of universal admiration.

the Crown and the nobility, and for a while, at least, gave the country peace under the rule of a despotism as iron as could be. It need not be said how well he knew all the history preceding these times. No more thrilling epoch in Britain's history; the world can never know any mightier artist to paint the theme with colour and effect equal to its result on her destinies.

Shakespeare had oftentimes traversed and knew well the places around Stratford; one and all can be traced in his works, though under names varying from their originals.

The Avon, which assuredly constitutes the leading "line of beauty and grace" of this charming district, takes its origin from a spring called Avon well, in the village of Naseby, in Northamptonshire, enters the county of Warwick, through which it flows

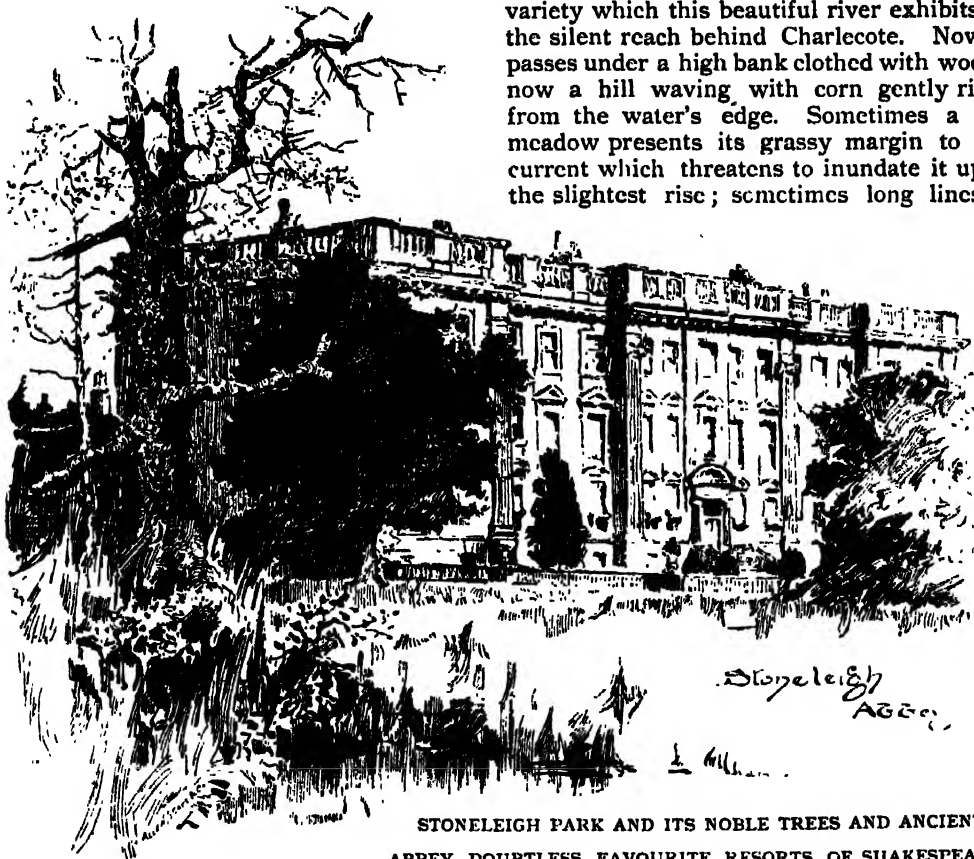


These features of his work should explain how rarely he names the places and spots from which he drew his inspirations. As mature thought and experience became his, he more and more concealed many of the local associations closely identified with his early life, and which, in most instances, would need entire transformation to give them enough novelty and action to suit his dramatic designs. He had studied the battlefield of Evesham, doubtless from an elevated point familiar to him, about two and a half miles, near Twyford. The Avon is distant about a mile, and immediately below Twyford is the hollow known as Battlefield, where there is ascent to a raised platform of green hill, the very scene of the battle which closed the fearful conflicts between

in a south-west direction, and widening out into a broad stream as it approaches Stratford, continues its course through Worcestershire, and finally joins the Severn at Tewkesbury. It divides Warwickshire into two irregularly-sized portions. The south or smaller division, called "Heldon," is a champaign country, of great fertility; whilst the northern or larger portion, entitled "The Woodland," though generally highly cultivated, is interspersed likewise with wild moorland and heaths. It includes an extensive district bearing the name of the "Forest of Arden," which still contains much fine timber, principally oak. Much of this forest-land, extending north-by-west from Stratford, must have been familiar to Shakespeare, and furnished him with the

prototype of the charming descriptions of forest scenery which he has introduced in "As You Like It."

Charlecote's charming park is full of rich woodland scenery. There are two noble avenues of trees, each leading to the Elizabethan Gateway. The lime-tree avenue may, perhaps, be of a later date than the age of Elizabeth; and one elm has evidently succeeded another from century to century.



STONELEIGH PARK AND ITS NOBLE TREES AND ANCIENT ABBEY, DOUBTLESS FAVOURITE RESORTS OF SHAKESPEARE.

But there are old gnarled oaks and beeches dotted about the park. Its little knolls and valleys are the same as they were two centuries ago. The same Avon flows beneath the gentle elevation on which the house stands, sparkling in the sunshine as brightly as when that house was first built. There may we still lie—

"Under an oak, whose antique root peeps out
Upon the brook that brawls along this wood,"

and doubt not that there was the place to which—

"A poor sequester'd stag,
That from the hunter's aim had ta'en a hurt,
Did come to languish."

—"As You Like It, act ii., sc. 1.

There may we still see—

"A careless herd,
Full of the pasture,"

leaping gaily along, or crossing the river at their own will in search of fresh fields and low branches whereon to browse. Nothing can be more interesting than the constant variety which this beautiful river exhibits in the silent reach behind Charlecote. Now it passes under a high bank clothed with wood; now a hill waving with corn gently rises from the water's edge. Sometimes a flat meadow presents its grassy margin to the current which threatens to inundate it upon the slightest rise; sometimes long lines of

willow or alder shut out the land, and throw their deep shadows over the placid stream. Islands of sedge here and there render the channel unnavigable except to the smallest boat. A willow thrusting its trunk over the stream reminds us of Ophelia:—

"There is a willow grows ascaunt the brook
That shows his hoar leaves in the glassy stream."

A gust of wind raises the underside of the leaves to view, and we then perceive the

exquisite correctness of the epithet "hoar." Hawthorns, here and there, grow upon the water's edge; and the dog-rose spots the green bank with its faint red. The pollard willow is not so frequent as in other part of the district, but the unlopped trees wear their feathery branches with usual grace.

The village of Charlecote is now one of the prettiest of objects. Whatever is new about it, and—most of the cottages are new,—looks like a restoration of what was old. The same character prevails in the neighbouring village of Hampton Lucy; and it may not be too much to assume that the memory of him who walked in these pleasant places in his younger days, long before the sound of his greatness had gone forth to the ends of the earth, has led to the desire to preserve here something of the architectural character of the age in which he lived. There are a few old houses still left in Charlecote; but the more important have been swept away.

Falstaff. You have here a goodly dwelling, and a rich.

Shallow. Barren, barren, barren; beggars all, beggars all, Sir John:—marry, good air.

—*King Henry IV.*, Part II., act v. sc. 3.

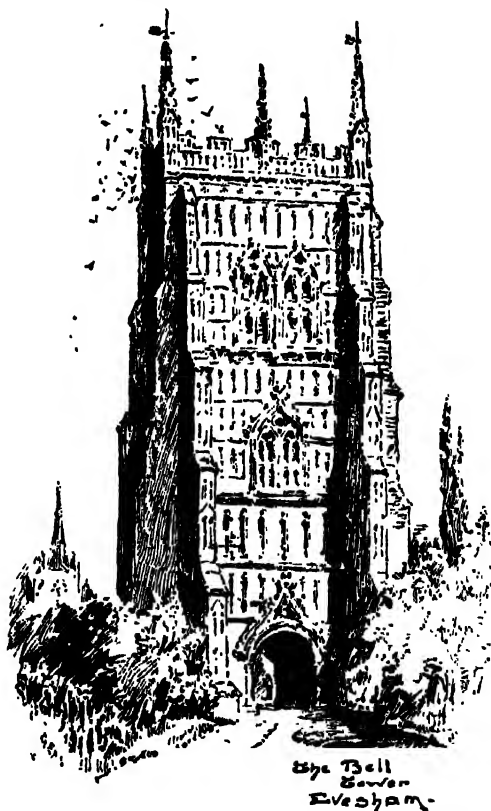
Of the many interesting spots associated with the name of Shakespear, few perhaps have preserved their original features more unchanged than this famous seat of the Lucys, the venerable hall of Charlecote. The village from which the mansion derives its name is situated on the eastern bank of the Avon, Shakespear's native river, about four miles north-east from the town of Stratford, and six miles south of Warwick. The hall was erected in the time of Queen Elizabeth, by the alleged prosecutor of Shakespear for stealing the deer, whom the immortal bard has figured. The mansion may be taken as a fair specimen of the residence of a wealthy country gentleman of the days of "good Queen Bess"; and although some alterations have from time to time been effected in the building, its principal front still preserves its antique grandeur; and no one can stroll through the beautiful English scenery with which it is surrounded without recalling to mind its classic interest.

The old manor-house stands in a park of considerable extent, luxuriously planted with trees of noble growth, amid which are the graceful windings of the silvery Avon; whilst the gentle undulations of the ground, covered with a smooth velvet-like turf, are enlivened with herds of fallow deer. One side of the house looks down upon the river

and towards Stratford; and the opposite front opens into the old court, now a garden. Immediately south of the house, and within the demesne, the river Hele, which rises at Edgehill, flows tranquilly on its way, beneath a beautiful Rialto bridge, to unite its waters with the neighbouring stream, as has been referred to by Jago, a local poet, in the following lines:—

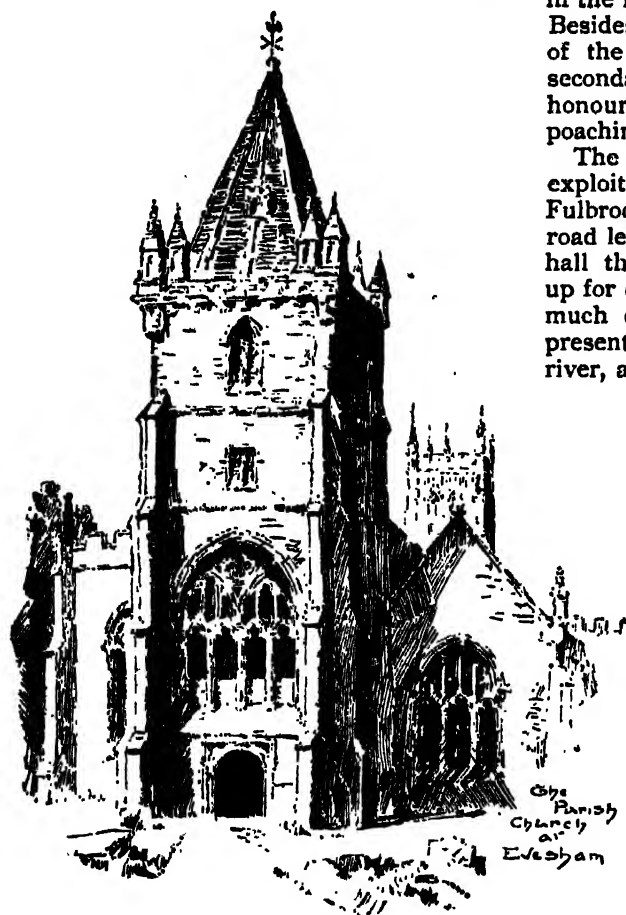
"Charlecote's fair domain,
Where Avon's sportive stream delighted strays
Through the gay, smiling meads, and to his bed
Hele's gentle current woos, by Lucy's hand
In every graceful ornament attired,
And worthier such to share his liquid realms."

The gateway is built in imitation of the ancient barbican. The mansion, which is constructed of brick, with stone dressings, consists of a spacious centre, with two projecting wings, and the four principal angles of the house are flanked each by a lofty



octagonal turret, with a cupola and gilt vane. The entrance porch is of stone, elaborately ornamented. Over the door appear the arms of Queen Elizabeth, and on the summit of the whole, at the angles, are

the royal supporters, in a sitting posture, each supporting an upright banner in its claws. The great hall—always the principal feature in these fine old manor houses—retains



much of its original appearance: its oaken ceiling is arched and lofty, the chimney of ample dimensions, and the windows contain the armorial bearings of the Lucys and others, richly emblazoned in painted glass; whilst around the walls are hung numerous portraits, and other paintings, connected with the history of the family. On the spacious mantel-piece are the initials of Sir Thomas Lucy, **T. L.** in large old-fashioned letters, raised and gilt, together with the date of the building of the hall, 1558. There is also a cast said to be the bust of Sir Thomas, taken from his monument in Charlecote Church—some say it is that of his son—and among the portraits above mentioned, one of himself sitting at a table with his wife; a large family piece containing a portrait of Sir

Thomas—grandson of old Sir Thomas Lucy—his wife, and six children, painted by Corbélius Jansen, while on a visit here. The two youngest boys have also portraits in the hall,—Sir Fulke and Sir Richard Lucy. Besides those there are also various portraits of the Lucy family, all, however, of very secondary interest,—the rare old Knight, so honoured and immortalized in his wrath of poaching, being the hero of the house.

The scene of the pretended deer-stealing exploit is stated to have been the old park of Fulbrook, now demolished, situate on the road leading to Warwick; and it was in its hall that he is said to have been brought up for examination. The house has been much enlarged and embellished during the present century, two good rooms facing the river, a dining and drawing room, having been built. Besides the pictures in the hall, there are some good pictures scattered through the various rooms.

Prior to the Norman invasion, the lordship of Charlecote,—or Cerlecote, as it appears from the Domesday Book the name was then written,—was then possessed by one Saxi, and it was subsequently held by the Earl of Mellent. It would seem to have derived its appellation from some ancient Saxon possessor, Ceorle being a name not infrequently met with in very early times. From the Earl of Mellent, Charlecote, with the rest of his lands, passed to his brother, Henry de Newburg, Earl of Warwick, and were inherited by Henry's son Roger, Earl

of Warwick, a partisan of the Empress Maud, and a munificent benefactor to the church, who enfeoffed Thurstane de Montfort with large possessions in the county of Warwick, of which Charlecote formed a minor portion. The estate of Charlecote was subsequently given by Henry de Montfort to Walter, the son of Thurstane de Charlecote, and the grant was confirmed by Richard I., who "added divers immunities and privileges," all of which were ratified by King John in 1203. In Dugdale's "Antiquities" we read, "It is not unlikely that the said Thurstane de Cherlecote was a younger son of the before-specified Thurstane de Montfort; for, that he was paternally a Montfort, the MS. history of Wroxall importeth, and that the same Thurstane was his father, not only the likeli-

hood in time, but his Christian name doth very much argue." Walter de Charlecote left at his decease a son, William, who changed his name to Lucy, about the close of the twelfth century,—a change Sir William Dugdale accounts for by the supposition that his mother was an heiress of some branch of the Norman family which bore that designation. This gallant knight took up arms with the barons against King John, when all his lands were seized by the Crown; but returning to his allegiance, he had a full restoration in the first year of the ensuing reign. From him descended in direct succession a long line of worthy knights, each of whom was greatly distinguished in the mili-

of Shakespeare has, however, gained for him more notoriety than any of the honours he enjoyed. The family bore for their arms *three lucas* (pikefish) *hauriant d'argent*, in the person of William, who, as above stated, assumed the name of Lucy; so that Shakespeare is sufficiently warranted in satirically causing Justice Shallow to affirm that his is "an old coat." "All his ancestors that come after him," says Slender, another member of this ancient family, "may give the *dozen white lucas* in their coat."—"Merry Wives of Windsor," act i., scene i.

It is said that in Shakespeare's day deer could not have been stolen from the preserves of Charlecote Park. However this



tary proceedings of the period, whilst the family bore eminent sway in that part of the country through many generations. During the Wars of the Roses, the Lucys arrayed themselves under the banner of the House of York, and at the battle of Stoke, Edmund Lucy commanded a division of the Royal Army. His great-grandson, Sir Thomas Lucy, in the first year of Queen Elizabeth's reign, rebuilt the manor-house of Charlecote as it now stands. He was an active justice of the peace, was knighted in the seventh year of Queen Elizabeth, and sat for some time in Parliament as one of the representatives of his native county. His alleged persecution

may have been, there are many hundreds now, both of the fallow and red kind, the latter dangerous to wayfarers. Judging from the herds fed on the land by the present head of the Lucy family, the deer thrive wonderfully, and although it has not fallen to the lot of the writer to taste a haunch of the real Charlecote article, they look very inviting.

Through a long life-study of the materials afforded for a biography of Shakespeare, the writer's sole endeavour has been to deal truthfully and fairly with every feature, to dismiss the manifestly absurd and grossly inconsistent statements and conclusions hitherto prevalent, and grafted on to his

name as matter of course, through generations without question. The religious feature of the time has had more to do with the creation of difficulties and hindrances than either party will admit, so also we may conclude that the Puritan party, after the great master's passing away from the world, have most to answer for in the nakedness of material. Sir Thomas Lucy was a narrow and extreme, a persecuting and almost fanatical Protestant, and many events had happened to intensify his bitterness against presumed Romanists. In particular, Mary Shakespeare's family connexions—the Ardens

upon Sir Thomas Lucy. His intensely vindictive feeling was exemplified a little later by his bringing forward a motion in Parliament in favour of devising some new and lingering tortures for the execution of a prisoner. As the historian Froude puts it: "Sir Thomas Lucy—Shakespeare's Lucy,



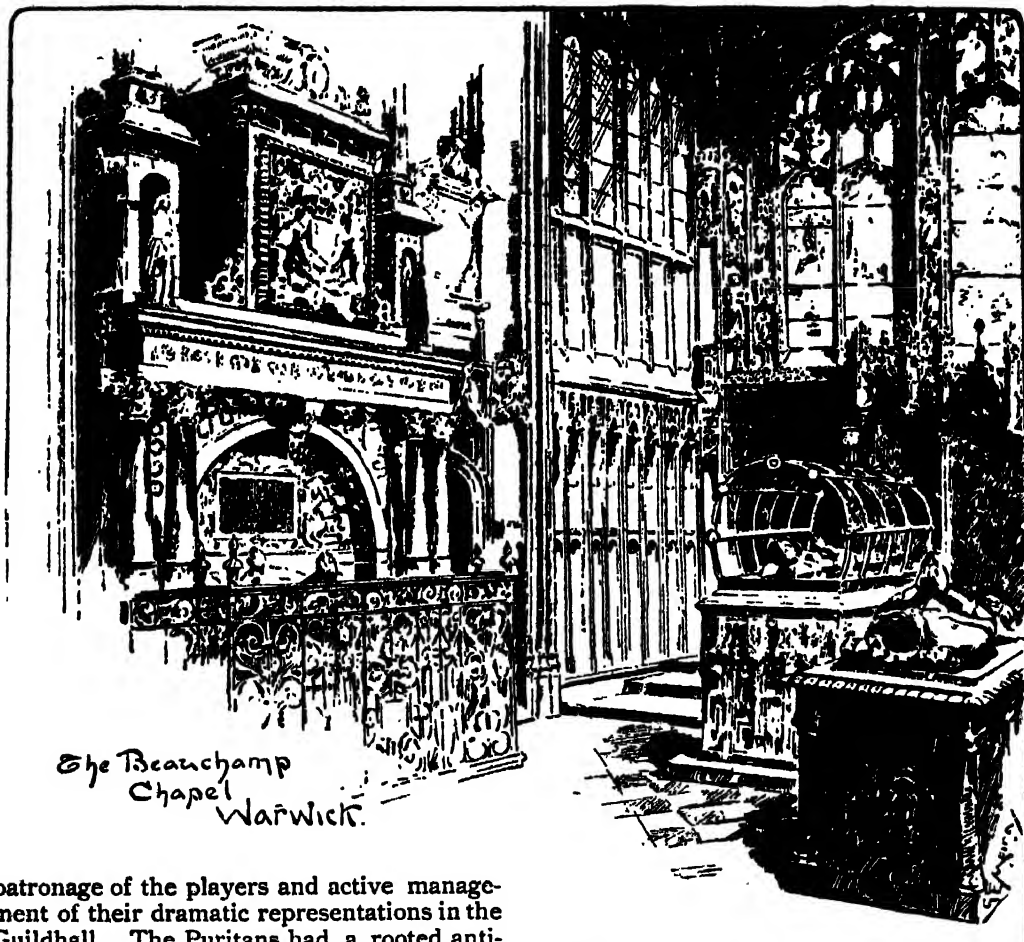
of Parkhall—had been convicted of conspiracy against the Queen's life. The son-in-law of Edward Arden, John Somerville, a rash and "hot-spirited young gentleman," instigated by Hall, the family priest, had formed the design of going to London and assassinating Queen Elizabeth with his own hand. He started on his journey in November, 1583, but talked so incautiously by the way, that he was arrested, conveyed to the Tower, and, under a threat of the rack, confessed everything, accusing his father-in-law as an accomplice, and the priest as the instigator of the crime. All three were tried and convicted. Somerville strangled himself in prison, and Edward Arden was hanged at Tyburn. These events produced a deep impression in Warwickshire, and especially

*The front
of the
Leicester Hospital
Warwick*

the original, perhaps, of Justice Shallow—with an English fierceness at the bottom of his stupid nature, proposed in the House of Commons that some new law should be devised for an execution. John Shakespeare, there is no doubt, had, from various circum-

stances, become an irregular attendant at church, in fact, had altogether ceased to attend at all; his wife's family, there is no doubt, had been strong Romanists, proved by the terrible calamity which had befallen the family, so that altogether the ban had been put upon them, and they had been for a long time suspects. Sir Thomas would resent John Shakespeare's known profuse hospitality as alderman and bailiff, and especially his official

all time after the grave had enfolded their remains in its unbroken silence! There is a wide blank in our knowledge of John and Mary Shakespeare. He is known to us mainly by the partial brightness, or the occasional dark shadow, which his name casts over old passionless records. The mother of the poet must naturally form for us an object of more eager interest. We should all be glad to know how far the intellect or the character



patronage of the players and active management of their dramatic representations in the Guildhall. The Puritans had a rooted antipathy to the stage, and to the jaundiced eye of the local justice the reverses of the Shakespeares would probably appear as a judgment on their way of life.

How wide are the sympathies evoked by genius, and how long is the trail of its glory! We have all we want of the least important lives, and dead silence regarding others. How little these people could have dreamt in their lifetime of the restless curiosity which was to pursue their memories during

of the young phenomenon was influenced by her fine sense of loving tenderness, but in the obscurity in which she has disappeared, it would be vain to indulge this curiosity. Not a word, or a look, or a gesture of hers pierces the night of ages to light up for a moment her image.

How endless is the series of petty families which conspired to remove the great author, as far as possible, beyond the reach of what is regarded as direct and definite knowledge.



Old House in Warwick.

At various points we think we are about to touch him, and then some strange object intervenes, and, like a darkness flitting through the air, casts his image into remote and indistinct shadow. The impersonality of his dramatic genius seems to follow him in his life. Now we come across his name in the writings of some contemporary, and naturally expect that its introduction will lead to some notice of his character; but the account is withheld, as if it could only refer to some topic which was already universally known. It certainly is not from a want of biographers, or of critics, that any mystery still hangs over Shakespeare's memory. No other writer, perhaps, that ever lived has been the object of half so much minute and patient and varied research. Englishmen, however, owed it to the fame of their wonderful poet that they should endeavour to shed every accessible light on his life and his labours; and we have all some reason to feel grateful to the men who have with such toil devoted themselves to this undertaking.

Now, after three centuries, the truth of Shakespeare's delineation of the men of the class chosen for characters in his plays is wondrously evident.

Go into what may be called the general room of either of the old Inns at Stratford at an hour when peasant serving men and the maids are congregated, and we are pretty sure to get the experience of many phases of human life illustrated there by the living, at that moment, just as it had

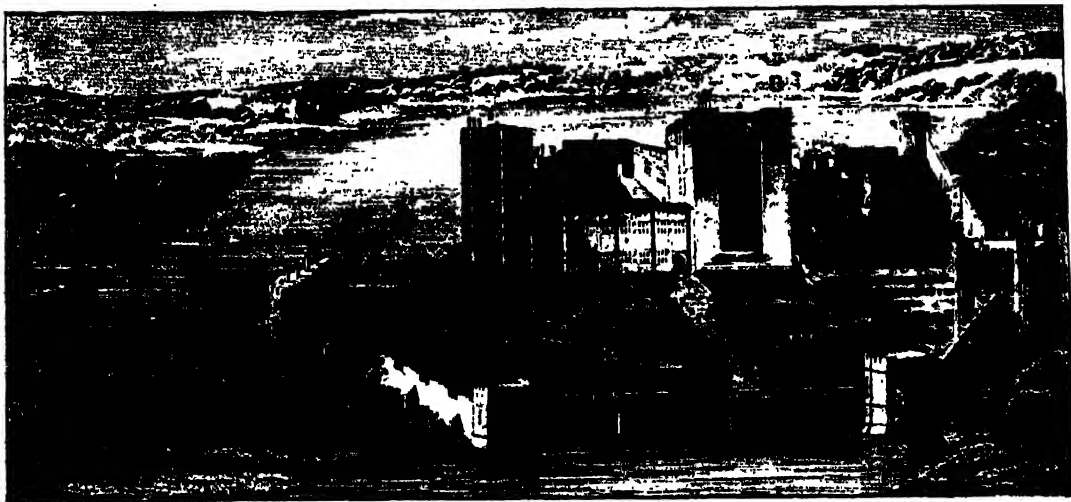
been by Shakespeare, three centuries since. Generally in such cases it is easy to identify, at least in aspect, many with the Shakespearean character. Yonder, for instance, though in no parti-coloured suit, is a veritable Touchstone, whose sayings are always an odd admixture of quaintness and shrewd wisdom; close by him was *his* Audrey, a buxom, wholesome-blooded young woman, who in her native simplicity of heart could exclaim, "The gods give us joy," with as much earnestness as her prototype of Arden was wont to do. There also was another old Adam, a grandsire of seventy winters, to whom winter itself had not been over-tyrannous, but who was lusty still. Nor is this all. Hitherto it may have been that the lighter muse of Shakespeare affords illustration in this famous room, just as it had been, many years since, in a place not very far distant. But there is a little of the more serious hue. Behold it in yon *very* aged man, sometimes almost senile in his speech, gracious and petulant by turns, and who, as it is getting near the midnight hour, lapses into a sort of semi-slumber, mumbling all the time fragments of broken sentences. Is not he the Lear of humble life? Yes. Has he a Cordelia? Yes to that as well. Where? There, just entered the apartment; the youngest of his children, who seeks him out tenderly, wraps him up well, and leads



him from the old, harmless resort, to his home, carefully as mother ever tended her baby. Shakespeare! type of the universal! Another proof of what thou art, even here.

To endeavour to touch upon the larger and more august aspect of Shakespeare's life—when, as his wonderful sonnets betray, his great heart had felt the devastating blast of cruel passions, and the deepest knowledge of the good and evil of the universe had been borne in upon his soul—would be impious presumption. Happily, to the stroller in Stratford, every association connected with him is gentle and tender. His image, as it rises there, is of smiling boyhood, or sedate and benignant maturity, always either joyous or serene, never passionate, or turbulent, or dark. The pilgrim thinks of him as a happy child at his father's fireside; as a wondering schoolboy in the quiet, venerable close of the old Guild Chapel, where still the only sound that breaks the

to the most rigid of all tests—the pecuniary standard. According to the old fable, when Mercury wanted to know in what account he stood in this lower world, he went to an image shop, and found to his disgust that the purchaser of any respectable deity might have him into the bargain. On these occasions it was the worshippers who mustered to compete for the relics of the divine poet—not his bones or his garments, but his first, second, third, and even fourth editions. The well-known gallery in Wellington Street, which is so dangerous to enter, unless you are prepared to bid against deputations from the whole human race, was crammed to excess throughout all the day. Mr. George Daniel's Shakespearean library, collected with so much care and cost, was to be scat-



KENILWORTH, IN SHAKESPEARE'S TIME: FROM AN OLD ENGRAVING.

silence is the chirp of birds or the creaking of the church vane, singing the wail of mutation; as a handsome, dauntless youth, sporting by his beloved river, or roaming through field and forest many miles about; as the bold, adventurous spirit, bent on frolic, and possibly a little mischief, and not averse to danger, leading, perhaps, the wild lads of his village in their poaching depredations on the park of Charlecote.

Who will deny the wondrously increasing interest in whatever pertains to England's poet of mankind? The value of copies of original editions of plays published during his lifetime seems to defy all estimate. Tuesday, the 26th January, 1864, was a great day in Shakespearean annals, for it appealed

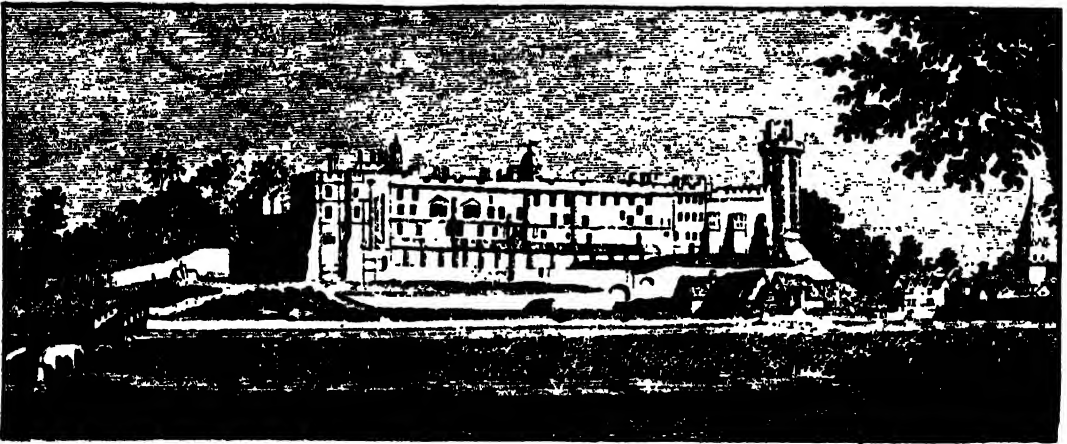
tered to the wide world. First one inappreciable treasure was offered to universal competition, then another; and the result justified the solemnity of the occasion. Thin little quartos, the mere librettos of performances at the Globe or at Blackfriars—for it is hallowed ground on which we ourselves stand—went for £300 apiece, some a good deal more. In the last generation bibliomania was a mania, and the stupid outside world looked with amazement on a few gentlemen, with more money than wit, throwing away fortunes on mouldy, worm-eaten, unreadable little books, that had nothing to recommend them, it was supposed, but their rarity, sometimes the just measure of their use. But bibliomania is

no mania in these days, in any point of view. These findings from old chests and gatherings from old bookstalls, that fortunate men picked up for nothing and sold for £20 or £30, are now worth ten or twenty times as much. No doubt the buyers have greatly multiplied, while the article is in its nature a fixed quantity. The unique and perfect first edition of a great work is a gem which cannot be reproduced or repeated. It is a Koh-i-noor which remains one and the same, while its admirers are continually more numerous and more wealthy. But this is not all. Mind is rising in the market. Soul is in the ascendant. The divine gifts are at a premium. It is time that spiritual things should have a turn; nature has had a fearfully long spell.

The prices fetched would have astonished even the Dibbins of that period. Many of the

with which we invest the merest trifle that once belonged to a great man. The British Museum did not neglect the opportunity, which, in the nature of things, is less likely to return year by year, as treasures of this sort are gradually, but finally, absorbed into great collections. They may pass from one private hand to another, but the national library is a bourne from which no such traveller ever returns. For a few more years, the *ipsissima verba*, the very leaves of our great poet, will fly from shelf to shelf, and have a career of adventure—perhaps, though we doubt it, their falls as well as their rises in the market; but, once lodged in the great public receptacle, they find their rest—we hope not their grave—to the end of mortal time; unless, indeed, we should relapse into barbarism or fanaticism.

Close upon Shakespeare leaving the place



WARWICK CASTLE, AS IN SHAKESPEARE'S TIME: FROM AN OLD PRINT.

separate plays were knocked down at a good deal more than three hundred guineas, and, we will venture to say, are as good speculations as houses and lands! Till we plunge into barbarism again, they must bear an increasing value. The world bids for them. One of two similar copies of an original edition of the Sonnets that Narcissus Luttrell gave a shilling for was knocked down to an American for 215 guineas. Well done, Brother Jonathan; we wish you were spending a little more of your money in dividing with us the relics of the greatest of poets. He belongs to you as much as to us, and it is a bond of union when other bonds fail. But these are more than relics, and have more than the purely sentimental character

of his birth and entering on a London career, his greatness dawned. At such a moment a stranger asks, Who is the man, and where was he born, and where does he live, that not only his acts and scenes are placed in any age or in any land, but that he can fill his stage with the very living men of the time and place represented; make them move as easily as if he held them in strings; and make them speak not only with general conformity to their common position, but with individual and distinctive propriety, so that each is different from the rest? Did he live in ancient Rome, strolling the Forum or climbing the Capitol; hear ancient matrons converse with modest dignity; listen to conspirators among the columns of its

porticoes; mingle among Senators around Pompey's statue; or with plebeians crowding to hear Brutus or Anthony harangue? Was he accustomed to idle in the piazza of St. Mark, or shoot his gondola under the Rialto? Or was he a knight or even archer in the fields of France or England during the period of the Plantagenets or Tudors, and witnessed and wrote down the great deeds of those times, and knew intimately and personally each puissant lord who distinguished himself by his valour, by his wisdom, or even by his crimes? Did he live in the courts of princes, perchance holding some office which enabled him to listen to the grave utterances of kings and their councillors, or to the witty sayings of court jesters? Did he consort with banished princes, and partake of their sports and their sufferings? In fine, did he live in great

however, in no way attached to the hosteleries, which in Shakespeare's day were models of comfort, and frequently tempting to those possessed of means. "Mine host" is believed to have connived at road blockades as a means of prolonging guests' sojourn. Of horses pretendedly equal of transport, there was no lack, and a journey to London was of all other vanquishers of *ennui* the alternative most in favour. Shakespeare, there is no doubt, knew the road well, and was not indifferent to its wayside hilarities. He had often speeded it as Walter Roche's law-lieutenant, and, in the action of his father against John Lambert the personal attendance of the plaintiff is requested "before your good lordship in Her Majesty's highness Court of Chancery." The poet's cousin, Thomas Greene, and his friend Richard Quiney, and others of the neigh-



MONUMENT TO KING JOHN IN WORCESTER CATHEDRAL.

cities, or in shepherds' cottages, or in fields and woods; and does he date from John and live on to the Eighth Henry—a thread connecting in himself the different epochs of mediæval England? This ubiquity of Shakespeare's sympathies constitutes the unlimited extent and might of his dramatic genius. Where shall a boundary line be drawn, beyond which nothing original, new, and beautiful could be supposed to have come forth from his mind? The world says his genius was inexhaustible. To Newton was given the sway over the science of the civilized world; to Shakespeare the sovereignty over its literature.

Allusion to the difficulties of travel consequent on the frequent impassable condition of the roads has already been made. Such,

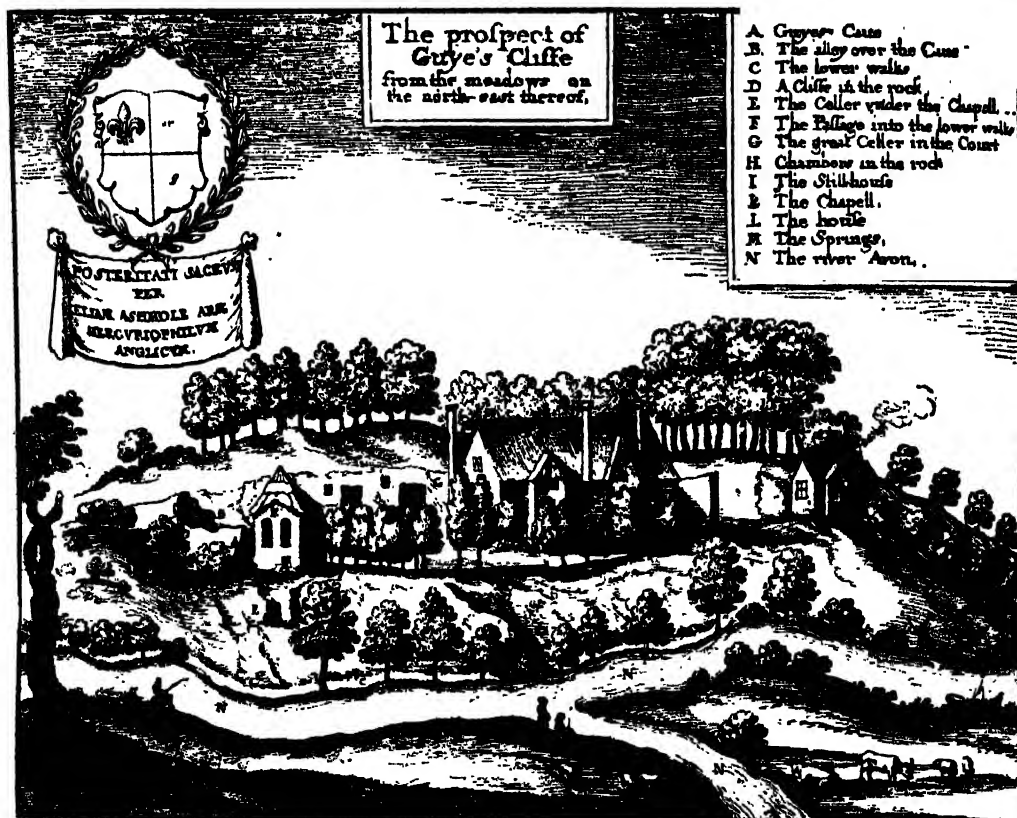
however, in no way attached to the hosteleries, which in Shakespeare's day were models of comfort, and frequently tempting to those possessed of means. "Mine host" is believed to have connived at road blockades as a means of prolonging guests' sojourn. Of horses pretendedly equal of transport, there was no lack, and a journey to London was of all other vanquishers of *ennui* the alternative most in favour. Shakespeare, there is no doubt, knew the road well, and was not indifferent to its wayside hilarities. He had often speeded it as Walter Roche's law-lieutenant, and, in the action of his father against John Lambert the personal attendance of the plaintiff is requested "before your good lordship in Her Majesty's highness Court of Chancery." The poet's cousin, Thomas Greene, and his friend Richard Quiney, and others of the neigh-

the key with him as of his own house, so long as he lodgeth there. If he lose aught whilst he abideth in the inn, the host is bound, by a general custom, to restore the damage, so that there is no greater security anywhere for travellers than in the greatest inns of England." Life was pleasant in these old hostleries, travellers being regaled with songs and music during their repasts.

At the time of his departure there were two roads to London, the one went by Edge Hill, Drayton, Banbury, Buckingham,

"Canterbury Tales." From Woodstock, he would proceed to Oxford, where he would visit and admire the colleges and halls, and thence on by way of High Wycombe and Uxbridge to London.

There is much of temptation to wander among the wondrous castle of Warwick, the ruins of Kenilworth, the ancient towns of Worcester, Warwick and Coventry, for, in all of these he drank of instances the after subjects of his dramatic creations. Mention must be made as in the olden recital that "a great



Aylesbury, Amersham, and Uxbridge; the other, and in all probability the one by which Shakespeare travelled, passed by Shipston-on-Stour to Woodstock, where the castle and park, with its historical past, must in various ways have appealed to the young poet's imagination, for it was at Woodstock that Fair Rosamond was kept in concealment by Henry II.; it was here that Edward III. had resided, and where Queen Elizabeth had been a prisoner before her accession to the throne; above all, it was there also that Chaucer wrote his immortal

cliff on the western bank of the Avon, was made choyce of by a pious man S. Dubritius (who, in the Britons' time had his episcopal seat at Warwick) for a place of devotion; where he built an oratory dedicated to S. Mary Magd., unto which, long after, in the Saxon dayes, did a devout heremite repair; who, finding the natural rock so proper for his cell, and the pleasant grove, where with it is back'd, yielding entertainment fit for solitude, seated himself here, which advantages invited also the famous Guy (sometime E. of Warwick) after his notable achievements, having

weaned himself from the deceitful pleasures of this world, to retire hither : where, receiving ghostly comfort from the heremite, he abode till his death. It continued in the same condition for a long time afterwards. In 8 E. 3. one Thomas de Lewes, being a heremite here, had the King's letters of protection for himself and all his goods. Whether it was out of respect to the memory of the famous Guy, or to view the rareness of its situation, cannot be said, but certain it is, that K. Henry 5, being on a time at Warw., came to see it, and did determine to have

the first priests for whose maintenance, and their successors, the said Earl, in 9 H. 6, had license to grant the Manour of Athorne in this county, with one mess, one carucate of land, and CXVII. *Xd.* ob. yearly rent lying in Whitnash and Wellsburne. And because he thought not that enough, by his last Will and Testament he ordained that in all hast after his decease, the remnant of what he had designed for his chantry priests there should by his executors be delivered, and made sure to them : and that the chapel there, with the other building, should be new



GUY'S CLIFF : FROM AN OLD PRINT.

founded a chantry here for 2 priests, had he not been by death prevented. After which the before specified Rich. Beauchamp, E. of Warw., bearing a great devotion to the place, whereupon then stood nothing but a small chapel, and a cottage in which the heremite dwelt, in 1 H. 6, obtained license to do the like for 2 priests, which should sing mass in the chapel there daily, for the good estate of the said Earl and his wife, during their lives ; and afterwards for the health of their souls, and the souls of all their parents, friends, with all the faithful deceased. Of which chantry Will. Berkswell (afterwards Dean of the Collegiate-Church in Warw.) and one John Bevington, were

built, as he, the said Earl, had devised, for the wholsom and convenient dwelling of those priests. The costs of all which, with the consecration of the two altars therein, as appeareth by the accounts of the said excutors, from the 28 to the 37 H. 6, amounted unto CLXXXIII. *Vd.* ob. Then did Earl Richard, in memory of the warlike Guy, erect that large statue there yet to be seen on the south side within that chapel, and having raised a roof over the adjacent springs walled them with stone.

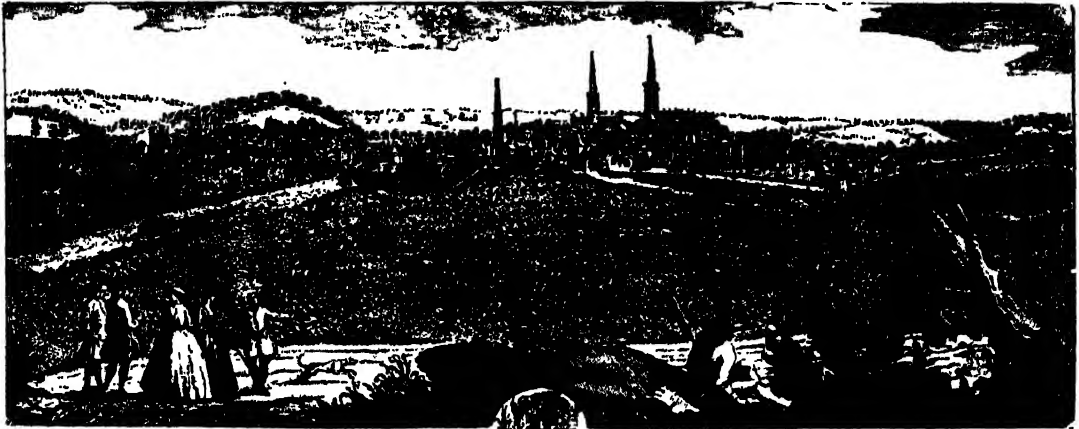
"A place this is of so great delight, in respect of the river gliding below the rock, the dry and wholesome situation, and the fair grove of lofty elms overshadowing

it, that to one who desireth a retired life, either for his devotions or study, the like is hardly to be found, as Leland in his MS. Itinerary, made temp. H. 8., doth well observe. It is a house (saith he) of pleasure, a place meet for the Muses: There is silence, a pretty wood, Autra in vivo saxo, the river rousing over the stones with a pretty noyse.

"Several caves are there hewen out of the firm rock, one of which, if we may believe tradition, was made by the renowned Guy, when he was an heremite here.

"The chapel here was dedicated to S. Mary Magd., as the grant thereof by 2 Eliz. to John Colburne in 22 of her reign manifesteth; and is in the parish of S. Nich. in the suburbs of Warwick. This John wedded the said Kath., the daughter and sole heir of

day had to contend in being shorn of all scenic and other, to us, essential helps with which any, or the least taking, performance is now decked. The great gulf now between actors did not then exist; the ablest were content to take secondary parts, and instead of a strife for the opinion of the play-going world, the aim with all was to secure perfectitude of production as a whole. What sort of presentation would now be made of "Hamlet" or "Romeo and Juliet," devoid of existing stage adjuncts? Could an audience in a Globe or Blackfriars, if dependent solely on the powers of the actors, be held for an hour? Plays, as then rendered, hung altogether on the capability of the actors, first to awaken interest and then to sustain it. There must have been high finish in every man's work, a mastery of the art by each



THE SOUTH PROSPECT OF THE CITY OF COVENTRY IN WARWICKSHIRE

From an old print.

Will. Flammock before mentioned. And of him was it purchased by Will. Hudson of Warwick."

TRUE SHAKESPEAREAN ART.

It is well, when arriving at the point of Shakespeare setting out for London, we should understand the then position of players. They were by no means the class of men as generally understood in our day. As a rule they were the best educated of the community, and as students of a population quite equal to the best of our performers, allowance being made for the little aid given them in their art.

Let an actor, who would honestly realize the real comparative difficulties of the situation, picture to himself the heavy odds against which his fellows of Shakespeare's

member assuming a part. There was no escape from the all-round nakedness; it was an Ovidian void, an utter absence of suggestiveness of any visible kind; all rested on the actors' individual capability of impressing words and actions as the plot developed, a very mastery, in fact, of Hamlet's instructions of what to do and how to do it. None but a fool propounds the question, Was Shakespeare a great actor? He has condensed into a few words the whole theatrical art. The more voluminous becomes human criticism, the more, in contrast, stands out his marvellous epitome of everything needed. Amid the bare walls of the Globe, any imperfect rendering even of less important characters, would mar the whole, the understandings of the pit would have been thrown out of gear; there existed

no subsidiary to restore consciousness ; manifestly, therefore, each man had to prove himself a hard worker of none but hard work. A Romeo with a male Juliet struggling against nature and the difficulties of sex, to yield any approach to adequate rendering of the great author's meanings, seems, under such surroundings, beyond the power of human achievement. Let the overweening pride of our day humble itself in these remembrances. There exist no Garricks among us now, though we are not deficient of would-be faithful men desirous of avoiding clap-trap fireworks as substitutes for honest study work, and who realize that their great exemplar Garrick was a zealous student

time, tells us, "the stage is so well reform'd in England, and grown to that height of language and gravity of style, dependency of parts, possibility of plot, compass of time and fullness of wit, that it was not anywhere to be equal'd, nor are the contrivers ashamed to permit their playes (as they were acted) to the public censure, where they stand firme, and are read with as much satisfaction as when presented on the stage they were with applause and honour." Who can enhance the pleasures to playgoers of the fifteen hundred and ninetieth year of grace, had a Siddons or a Rachel been vouchsafed to them? We, who have had brought home to us the never-to-be-forgotten



GUY'S CLIFF: FROM AN OLD PRINT.

of his art from first to last, and who, when having lived his sixty years, was as eager and earnest in endeavour to throw new light on a character as on the day of its first impersonation. No man ever mastered Shakespeare's golden rules as he; it was study without any relaxation whatever, the close of an unrivalled career stamped with earnest yearning that every performer working in conjunction with him should be up to the mark of need.

Let us, then, not underrate the excellence of the stage in Shakespeare's day of simplicity of "get-up," or, rather, the utter absence of all such. There need be no ignorance of what it really was. Gayton, a writer of the

voice and perfect refinement of bearing and action of Helen Faucit (Lady Martin), can alone estimate the privation of those Shakespeare generations who knew not woman as the all-pervading light of representations, occasioning such trances of delight. A perfect artist in every sense of the word, Lady Martin's gifts are not restricted to the stage; her pen, through its exquisite delineations of the great master's female characters, has transmitted to the world forms of beauty and purity, by her alone unfolded, the which shall go down to future generations as necessitous accompaniments to the divine creation of the great teacher who must ever reign supreme.

It would seem that no endeavours of "Glorious Queen Bess" could win to her the heart of "the greatest writer of all mankind." Even when the spirit had passed away at Richmond, his powers rested unmoved, and he was upbraided by his contemporaries for lack of loyalty. He felt deeply this unmerited wound, but it failed to move his pen; even the more than hints of obligations to his Sovereign for gracious favours could not be made to rouse him. At this distance of time, when the history of Elizabeth's reign becomes more truthfully regarded, the separation of her more than wisdom in her people and country's governance, from her nature and character as a woman, is avoided, and Shakespeare, with his wondrous penetration, saw both sides of her character; his admiration of the one was so deeply shadowed by the other as to hold his hand from any expression of feeling and sorrow at her death unless it rose spontaneously from the heart. Moreover, he shrunk from being made the record of future history (and he knew well what the world's estimate of himself would be), as placing her on the highest pinnacle of historic fame; probably he would have yielded if wisdom in rule and strength of will in maintenance of her country's supre-

macy had stood alone before his judgment seat. There were other features all powerful over his deeply domestic affectioned nature dominating to hold the silence he could never afterwards be induced to break.

Where lives the man who, with these thoughts passing through the mind, would resist the joy of a moment's glance at Britain's rare blessing in the union of the heart's every wish in the domestic lives of the Sovereign and her family? This beauty of history shall some day be told in charms worthy as a beacon for all peoples and families. Sir Theodore Martin, through his life of Albert the Good, has laid the concrete foundation; the structure thereon to be erected by future generations shall be worthy of the stone so well and truly laid. There will not be wanting any of the holiest features of family domestic life: not the least will shine forth a devoted daughter, who, through years of a mother's deepest sorrow, gave her entire life's hours and heart-devotion to alleviate her griefs as in caring through participating in the heavy daily duties of a nation's executive. These are far heavier than her people know or can realize. We can, however, all rejoice in the bestowal of a Beatrice to ease the burden and share its toils.





SHAKESPEARE IN LONDON.



F the myriads of human beings who on every day of the year pass over London Bridge, yielding it homage as one of the greatest thoroughfares of the world, a very infinitesimal few give heed to the thought that, within a few paces of the footfall of every individual traversing the bridge to or from the Surrey side, stands one of the only two antique examples of

pure Gothic architecture extant within the boundaries of the Metropolis proper, the minster abbey of St. Peter's sharing the dignity under the name of Westminster Abbey. Here, right in the centre of busy, struggling Southwark, stands one of the stateliest monuments of ancient times, built in and above by bridge approaches, so that the occasional one who can spare a moment from the anxious thought for bread or gain has to look down over a parapet wall to gather even a glance at its sacred

precincts. St. Mary Overie, its sweet name in Shakespeare's day, has given way to St. Saviour with the many; with the Shakespeareans, the old temple will never lose the name by which alone it was known of yore, and there are no buildings in England, save the Church of Holy Trinity and the Chapel of the Holy Guild at Stratford-on-Avon, so identified with Shakespeare's life as this.



Here it stood when old "Dan" Chaucer and his pilgrims started from the "Tabard" hostelry, close by, on their pilgrimages to the shrine of Thomas à Becket at Canterbury. Westminster Abbey and St. Mary Overies exist to us through the great conflagration of London never having reached them. Prior to the great fire, although ancient London abounded in Gothic churches, including the Cathedral of St. Paul, occupying the site of

the present Cathedral of the same name, yet few escaped the conflagration of 1666. In Shakespeare's day, the river laved the churchyard wall, and at spring-tides would exceed the bound of the ferry, which gave its ancient name, St. Mary Overie, and until the moon's mandate for retiring would, during several twelve hours, defyingly water the graves around the sanctuary.

In the time of this holy temple-building very many churches were dedicated to the maiden mother of the "Light of the world," so numerous that England was called "Our Lady's Dower." The name "Overie" comes from the old Saxon name "rye," which means a ford across a river, whether crossed by a boat or on foot. Before and at the period of the first foundation of this ancient church, there was not any bridge across the Thames at the site of the existing or previous bridge, or, indeed, at any of the points of present bridge structures. There was, however, a "rye" or ferry there, and a sort of religious romance attached to it through one of the general workers of the boat being the ferryman's daughter, named Mary. She has passed down as a woman given to piety and good works, and practically testified the reality of her religion by the expenditure of her acquired worldly means in the honour and glory of the Bestower. Time has exaggerated into idle fable much of this good maiden's life and deeds. Her father had held the ferry through a long series of years, and the business, being one of large profit acquisition had acquired considerable wealth. At his death Mary became its sole possessor. This humble maiden was led to found and even endow a church at the southern end of the ferry, which she dedicated to the Virgin Mary, and which from its site bore the name of "St. Mary Over Rye," or across the ferry. At the time of Mary helping her father and plying her oar for the navigation of the river's wide expanse, there existed a small rude church and humble priory at the point. Doubtless she had realized their blessings, and made a resolve under the Almighty will to enlarge both to the extent of the means bestowed. The then existing priory and church are said to have been founded by William Pont de l'Arche and William Daune, both being Norman knights.

St. Mary Overies is identified with the history of English literature in the persons of several famous men; and as the mausoleum of the poet Gower, whose works would

be a loved study of Shakespeare, it is more than reasonable it would be one of the first sacred shrines he visited on his settling in London, possibly the temple in which he regularly worshipped.

Afterwards it became doubly sacred to him, for it was to this hallowed shrine he brought the earthly remains of his dear brother and fellow-worker Edmond, who died in Southwark in his 28th year, and, as is believed, residing up to the day of his death with the immortal. Edmond rests in the centre aisle, the stone marking the spot being



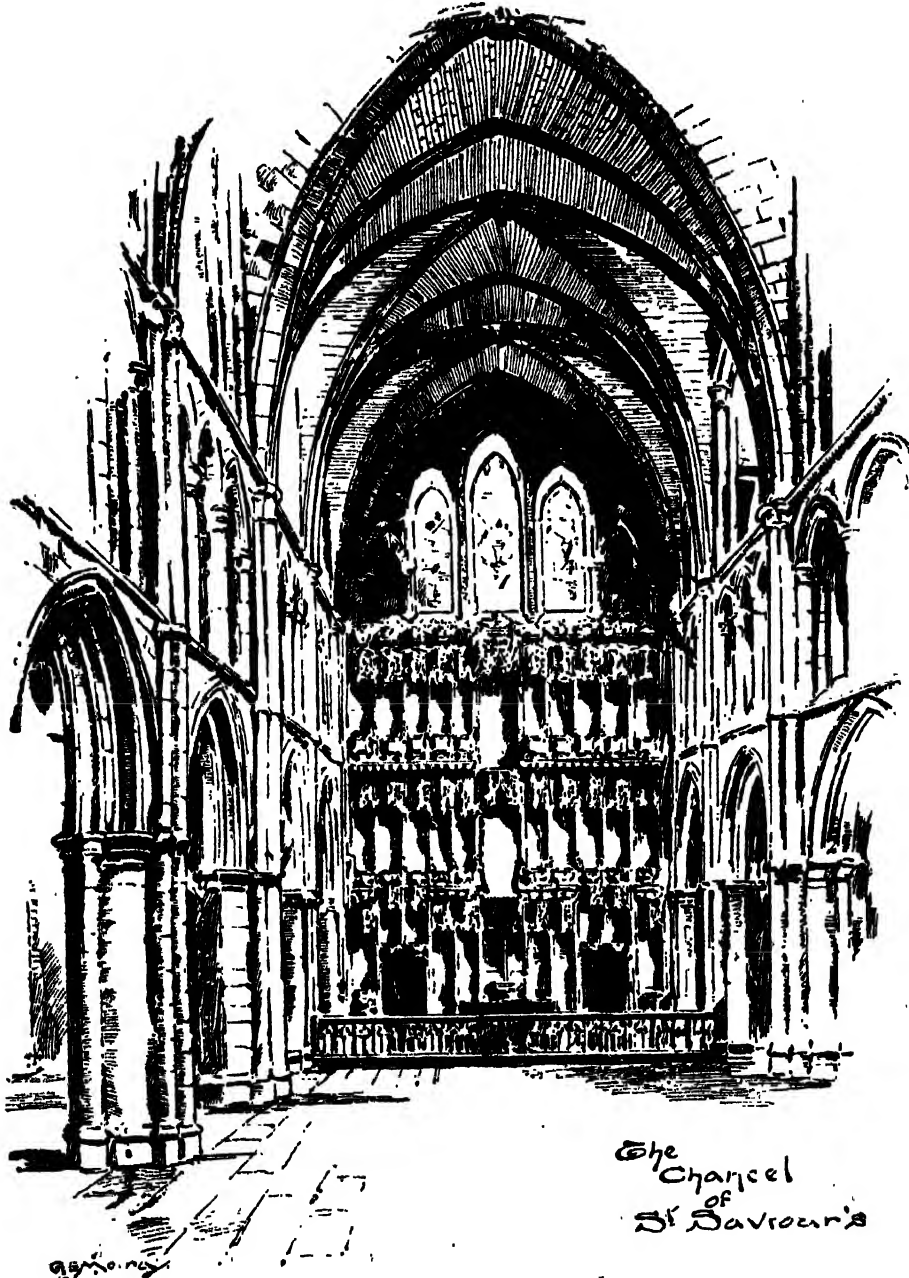
simply inscribed, "Edmond Shakespeare. Died December, 1607." Biographers assume that Edmond followed the pursuit of an actor, and was attached to his brother's company, but there is no evidence whatever in proof of this. His name does not appear in any of the associations of this time, nor is any mention made of him among the characters of any of the plays, notwithstanding that particulars of such are more detailed and precise than anything connected with the great dramatist's pursuits in London. Alleyne's descendants held that Edmond Shakespeare was his brother's business executant in the

management of his theatrical concerns, the most likely of all conclusions. What a world's inestimable treasure would be a record of that funeral procession of brothers in literature and actors of the time, with whom the mighty one was associated as joint labourers, forming the solemn funeral procession winding through the even then ancient temple, headed by the world's greatest dramatist as chief mourner, to the centre aisle, to the open grave awaiting the occupant for whom, under a brother's truly affectionate personal presence and direction, it had been prepared. Can any such precious lineaments, subjects of admiration amounting almost to worship for mankind to the end of time, be imagined as those of the great master in this hour of deep sorrow, had the transmission been vouchsafed? But it was not to be. The personality was not to come nearer the after generations of mankind; the fact of his presence at his brother's grave is the nearest approach permitted. St. Mary Overies, hallowed of time, on that funeral day, testified to the heart's bitterness of one whose grief was of no ordinary kind. Outward respect was not omitted, evidenced by the parish records mention of the tolling of the great bell and use of the funeral pall on the occasion. Around that grave would be ranged most of the greatest writers of the time, for the rapidity with which the great author had poured forth his wonderful conceptions, the endless profusion of his genius, the consummate judgment and knowledge of his art and its requirements, had excited the wonder and envy of his rivals. Their products of necessity or the impulse of passion could not keep pace with his creations, in whom the deliberate energy, the studiousness, the conscious reticence of the artist were as conspicuous as the fertility of his imagination and the impetuosity of his genius. Though daily mingling among them in the business of the theatres, he stood apart on a higher platform, for the greatness of his genius as a dramatist had been recognised from the first. The church registers then recorded the hideous ravages of the Great Plague; under its walls then slept many a knight and crusader; in the floors of its gruesome dark vaults the carved stones spoke to him of great and noble houses gone to dust below.

St. Mary Overies would be specially impressionable to the mind of Shakespeare through its connection with the memory of the Royal poet, King James I. of Scotland, who led his bride to the nuptial altar in this

church a century later than the time of Gower. This gallant Scottish prince, the first of the family of Royal Stuarts who bore the name of "James," subsequently so popular in the family, was the son of King Robert III., who was himself the great grandson of King Robert Bruce by the

"distaff line." What fane for worship so pleasurable to England's master mind, and, moreover, close to his Southwark home? His mind would revert to James having accompanied Henry V. in 1417 on his second martial expedition to France, which resulted in the conquest of Normandy and the English



The
Chancel
of
St. Saviour's

king's marriage with the Princess Katherine, the daughter of Charles VI. of France. James was freed by Henry V. on giving bondage for the payment of £40,000 as ransom, and, returning to his native land, ascended the throne.

James's association with "St. Mary Overies" thus came about:—During the

Beaufort, daughter of the Earl of Somerset, son of John of Gaunt, Shakespeare's "time-honoured Lancaster." Prince James sang the lady's praise in poetic strains of great merit, and was united to her in nuptial bonds before the altar of the church of St. Mary Overie, just before his return to Scotland.

Shakespeare would know full well his literary ability as that he proved a wise legislator and a good king, who had the prosperity of his people at heart.

The earlier biographers of Shakespeare were not equal to the recognising of the wide distinctions between him and the other dramatists of his age, and so have disgraced themselves by attaching to his good and gentle character other features than his great naturalness and the being opposed to their cumbrous pedantry. We must come down to the opinions of more modern times, when the poets and all great thinkers humbly acknowledge his superiority, in fact, a grand natural phenomena like the sun or ocean or the stars. Robert Greene, one of the "University Pens," had made in his youth what was known as the grand tour, and brought back with him the loosest habits and worst vices of the Continent. He embarked at an early age in the full tide of London dissipation, wrote novels, or what was known as love-pamphlets—very questionable publications—married a lady, and deserted her after spending her fortune; and then sank lower and lower in the profligate dens of the capital, till he fell to an abyss of demoralization from which he never recovered. In his last illness he wrote a tract called "The Repentance of Robert Greene," in which he confessed all his sins with a frankness more astonishing than that of Rousseau. His death was an appropriate close to such a career. Reduced to the lowest depths of distress and degradation, deserted by the gay companions who had banqueted with him in more prosperous hours, he was found lodging at the house of a struggling shoemaker in Dowgate, and indebted to the poor cobbler for the bare necessities of life. He was then not more than about 32 years of age. One night there was a debauch, at which Greene was present; the entertainment consisted of pickled herrings and Rhenish wine; and Greene, probably from previous want, ate and drank to such excess, that the surfeit was followed by sickness, which terminated in his death. The strangest part of the tragedy was this: The poor shoemaker's



The
Grange
St. Mary's
Church

Prince's incarceration in Windsor Castle, he occupied a chamber, the window of which looked out upon a flower garden. Here one day the Prince saw a very beautiful young lady walking, whose charms at once made a deep impression on the susceptible heart of the young Prince. This was the Lady Joanna

wife, who had nursed him in his illness, and had all throughout tended him with such help as she could out of her miserable resources, now that his corpse lay in her house, gave a touching evidence of her respect for his genius by crowning his dead body with a garland of bays, to show that a tenth muse honoured him more, being dead, than all the nine had honoured him while he lived.

No one has contributed so much by the discovery of documents solving mysteries in Shakespeare's life as the late Haliwell Phillips. He had the good fortune to discover a remarkable and unique series of documents respecting the two theatres with which the poet was connected. They even include lists of the original proprietors and sharers. Shakespeare's name does not occur in those lists. Mr. Haliwell Phillips furnishes the texts of those passages in which the great dramatist is expressly mentioned, notices by far the most interesting of anything yet brought to light. The sons of James Burbage are speaking in an affidavit. They tell us that, after relinquishing their theatrical speculation in Shoreditch, they "built the Globe with summes of money taken up at interest, which lay heavy on us many yeires, and to ourselves we joynd those men, Shakspeare, Crudall, Phillips, and others, partners in what they call the House." As to the Blackfriars, they say, "Our fathe. purchased it at extreame rates, and made it into a play-house with great charge and troble, which afterwards was leased out to one Evans, that first sett up the boyes commonly called the Queen's Majesti's Children of the Chappele. In processe of time, the boyes growing up to be men, it was considered thatt house would be as fitt for a play, and soe purchased the lease from Evans with our money, and placed

men players, which were Hemings, Condell, Shakespeare, and Richard Burbage." These important evidences contradict all recent theories and opinions respecting Shakespeare's business connection with the theatres.

The poet Gower's monument in the south transept is of Gothic style, covered with three arches, the roof within springing into many angles, under which lies the statue of the poet



John Gower's
monument
in St. Dunstons Church

in a long purple gown; on his head a coronet of roses, resting on three folios thus titled, *Vox Clamantis*, *Speculum Meditantis*, and *Confessio Amantis*. About his neck a collar of SS's, and his feet resting on a lion; over which, on the side of the monument, are his arms, pendent by the dexter corner, from a very antique cap; his crest, as borne by those who exercised on foot, in jousts and tournaments. At the back are three figures of women

with ducal coronets on their heads, representing Charity, Mercy, and Pity, adorned with scrolls of gold, on which is written the following lines :—

*Pour ta Pitie Jesu regarde
Et tiens cest Ame en sauve Garde.
For thy pity, Jesu, have regard,
And put this soul in safeguard.*

*Oh, bon Jesu, faite Mercy
Al' Ame dont le Corps gist icy.*

O good Jesu, show thy mercy to the soul whose body lies here.

*En toy quies Fitz de Dieu le Pere,
Sauve oit qui gist sous cest Pierre.*

In thee who art the Son of God the Father, be he saved who lies under this stone.

He was descended from Sir Robert Gower, Knight of Brabourne in Kent. By the collar about the neck of his statue, it appears he was created an esquire by patent, for all those thus made were invested with a silver collar of SS's, first instituted by Richard the Second, he also wore the coronet of robes as chief of poets ; but now more commonly used of laurel. For the style of his writing, take the following verses (by way of essay) in his *Vox Clamantis* :—

*Principio Regis oritur transgressio legis
Quo fortuna cadit et humus retrogata vadit,
Quomodo surrexit populus, quem non bene rexit,
Tempus adhuc plangit, super hoc quod Chronica tangit.*



Formerly situate in the boundary of Southwark.

And below them this :

*Armigeri scutum nihil a modo fuit tibi tutum,
Reddidit immolatum, morti generali tributum,
Spiritus exutum se gaudeat esse solutum,
Est ubi virtutum, Regnum sine labe statutum.*

Under the statue, the following inscription :—

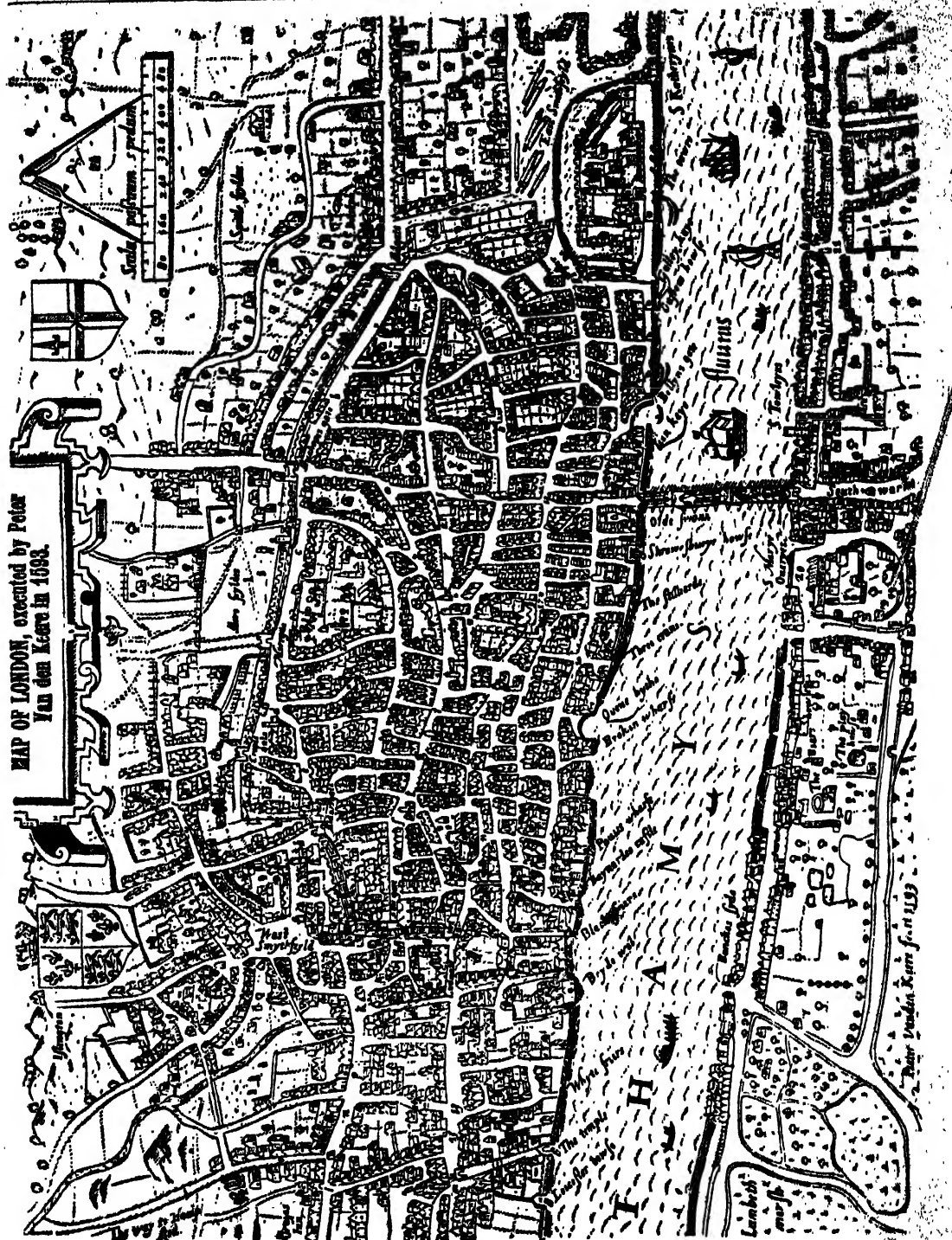
*Hic jacet Johannes Gower, Armiger, Anglorum
Poeta celeberrimus, ac huic sacro Edificio Benefactor,
insignis, temporibus Edw. III. et Rich. II.*

John Gower, being very gracious with Henry the Fourth, in his time carried the name of the only poet. His verses were full of good and grave morality. He only published these three books ; that entitled *Vox Clamantis*, treats of the unfortunate reign of Richard the Second. He died anno 1402 ; and is claimed as of the present Sutherland ducal family.

*Stultorum vile cepit concilium juvenile,
Et sectam senium decrevit esse rejeclam,
Tunc accusare quosdam presumpsit avare,
Unde catallorum gazas spoliavit eorum.*

Englised thus in Shakespeare's time :

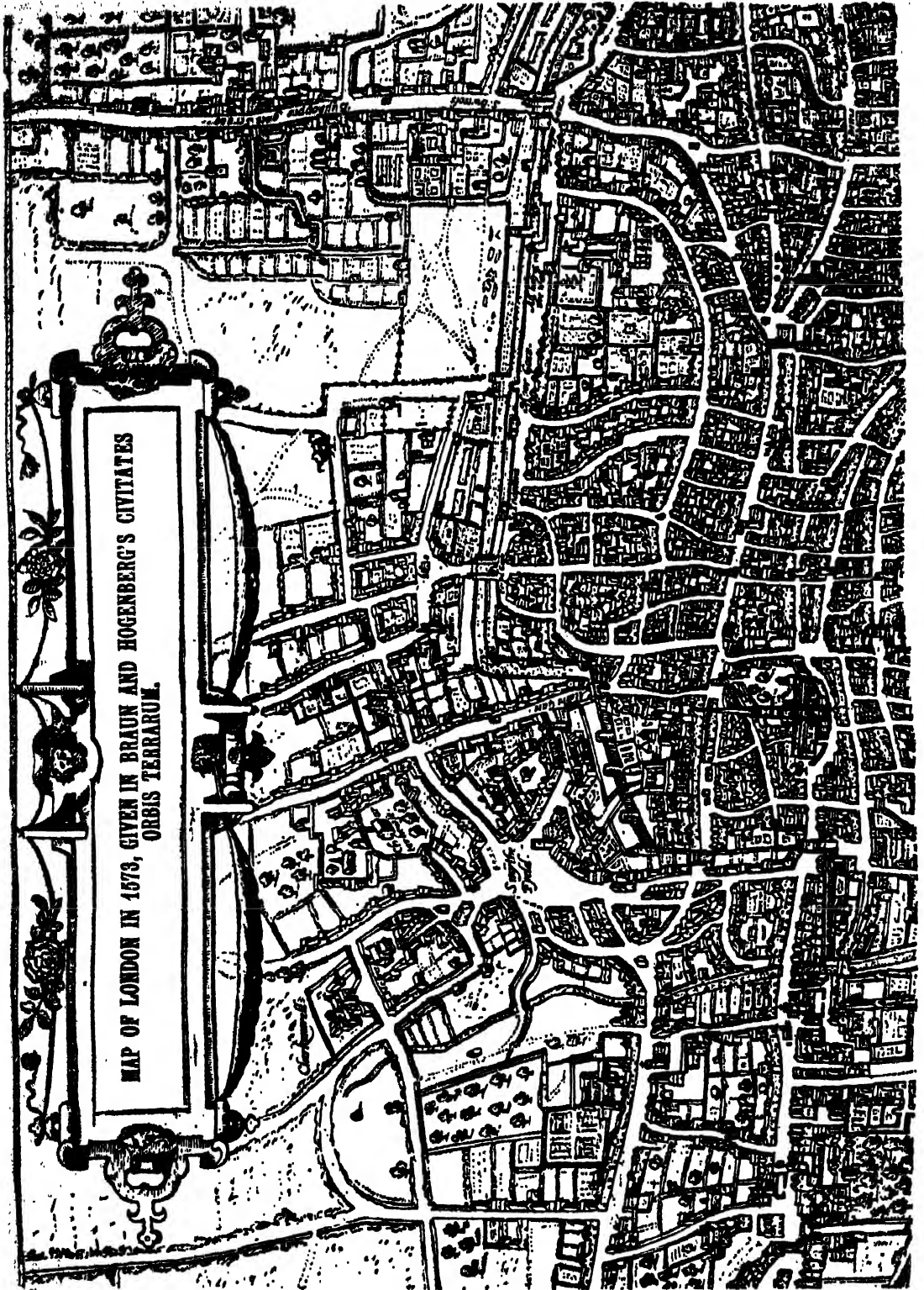
When this King first began to reigne
The laws neglected were,
Wherefore good fortune him forsooke
And th' earth did quake for fear.
The people also whom he poll'd
Against him did rebell,
The tyme doth yet bewaile the woes,
That Chronicles doe of tell,
To the foolysh councill of the lewde
And younge, he did receyve ;
And grave advice of aged heads,
He did reject and leave,
And then for greedy thirst of cofre,
Some subjectes he accuse,
To gayne theyr goodes into his hands,
Thus he the realm abuse.



Thus inscribed in right-hand corner:

Now Troy my name, when first my fame begun,
By Trajor Brute, who then we placed here
On fruitful soil, where pleasant Thames did run;
Sixth Lud my Lord, my King and Lover dear,
Encreast my bounds: and London (for that ring

Through Regions large he called him my name.
How famous since (I stately seat of Kings)
Have flourished aye; let other maps proclaim,
And let me joy thus happy still to see
This virtuous Peer my Sovereign King to be.



The existing maps of London in Shakespeare's time enable us to understand the area comprised, although there is much divergence of statement as to its population, some assuming a total of 200,000 souls, others ranging at fully one-third more, in 1610, of which no less than 12,000 are said to have been foreigners. Commerce, trade, and the industries, were in a very flourishing state, and it is computed that the River Thames afforded employment to no less than 40,000 men as boatmen, sailors, fishermen, and others. Amusements of all kinds found their ready votaries, and the founders of the new and improved drama

ing money freely in these places of amusement. Managers were at their wits' ends for novelties, and it is highly probable that earnest requests were made to Shakespeare to come up and help in the difficulty by supplying the material they most needed. Young as he was, he had already gauged public taste, and knew better than his friend Ben Jonson what was best suited to satisfy the public craving of the moment. It is strange that although Ben Jonson is allowed to have made a lengthened sojourn at Clifford, close to Stratford, during the time that Shakespeare's father resided there, yet his having done so is not used to show the families'



THEATRES SITUATE BEYOND THE CHURCH OF SHOREDITCH SHOWN IN THIS OLD PLAN.

had established themselves on the Surrey side of the Thames, where, beyond the control of city authorities, they were free to pursue their callings. So great was the demand for theatrical talent, that the several companies of players hitherto touring to the provinces ceased their wanderings and became stationary in London, where the theatres were filled to overflowing. The waterside, or rather marine contingent, was a great support, as it has ever been, spend-

intimacy. An early friendship would there have sprung up, continued, as we know, later in life, notwithstanding there must ever have existed a wide difference in the tastes and habits of the two as young men. Ben Jonson had served in the Netherlands, and close upon Shakespeare's arrival in London, the gallant Sir Philip Sydney received his mortal wound at Zutphen, and had a public funeral in St. Paul's Cathedral on the 16th February, 1587, the occasion having been

held as one of national mourning. Shakespeare, we may be assured, was present to behold the spectacle; indeed, it may be said that Shakespeare had the good fortune of having his life cast in one of the greatest historical periods, the gravitating point of which lay principally in London. The horrors of the Wars of the Roses, which had entrapped three generations, had come to an end, and men could now behold the footprints of that bloody season. Feudalism, with its limitations and restrictions, was set aside, and the nation was able to advance freely. Jonson, like many young men of the time, anxious to wrest the sword out of the hands of the Spaniards, had joined the Netherlands in their endeavours against their oppressors, but he does not appear to have advanced

affection, endowed with a sound business mind, evidenced especially in his leaving his home at Stratford with the knowledge and consent of his family and not secretly, as is alleged, to escape the consequences of any deer-stealing from the demesne of Sir Thomas Lucy at Charlecote. His character, even at this, its early development, his domestic circumstances, and his position in life, lead to a conviction that the migration had been well thought out and determined on, and was in no way the vague action writers have hitherto ascribed to it. Everything points to his having literary and theatrical acquaintances in London among whom his advent would not be that of a mere adventurous stranger of the John Sadler class, with whom it has been the



View of both sides of the Thames and Old London Bridge, showing St. Mary Overies Church and the Theatres as existent in Shakespeare's time.

himself in the world's opinion by his course at this time. He does not appear to have been in London at the time of Shakespeare's first arrival as a resident, and therefore was not a party to any urging the act of migration, which, as already stated, would be caused by the demand for special mental capability which he could and did supply to the great satisfaction of the parties in need. Burbage, who began his career only a year or two before Shakespeare, would join in an urgent call to come to London, especially seeing that Leicester and his company of actors had gone to the Netherlands, and the field was open to him as a lucrative exercise of his aptitude in play adaptation.

All the circumstances of Shakespeare's life prove him to have been of the deepest

habit of all biographers to associate his name. Unlike this young man, he needed not to bind himself for a period of years as a tradesman's assistant, an idea as far-fetched and improbable as the gaining a living by holding the horses of gentlemen playgoers, entirely disproved, inasmuch as there were no horses to hold, the audience coming citywards by water; and if there were any equestrians among them, they would hardly consign their steeds to a two or three hours' street tramp in a horse-stealing neighbourhood. The octogenarian parish clerk of Stratford's story, "that Shakespeare was received into a playhouse as a servitude," if by this statement is meant that his occupation on arriving in London was of the menial capacity represented, is

clearly an idle fable. Such a mind, even at a moment of breaking adrift from the occupations afforded to ordinary young men in his native town, could in no way be affected save to confirm the assurance that the migration was certain to benefit him materially. When affectionately embracing his wife and twins, and passing over Clopton Bridge with his eyes taking what would doubtless be an anxious farewell of Holy Trinity spire and the sternly grim tower of his old Grammar School, we may be sure the feelings uppermost were those inspired of firm resolve, and courageous regard of the future, rather than despair. As the objects of the town of his birth receded from view, and the more distant goal took a

changed his office of pedagogue for that of legal redresser of citizen wrongs, and who, it is very probable, was entrusted with conduct of the suit so seriously affecting his family, and which was then pending before the Courts in London. Walter Roche, with clerico-lawyer-like sagacity, had managed to secure the aid of one well versed in the affairs of the town, and the jealousies and bickerings acting to set law suits afoot and demand for their conduct before the courts in London men skilled as advisers in human weaknesses :

"Who, in hot blood,
Hath stepp'd into the law, which is past depth
To those that, without heed, plunge into it."

—*Timon of Athens*, act iii., scene 5.



THE HIGH STREET, SOUTHWARK: FROM AN OLD PRINT.

front place on the mind's tablet, the problem of providing for his family, increasing in double the ordinary ratio, was made plain for practical working out as seen in every after act of his life. His discerning eye foresaw the wide field of money (trash!) profit that lay before him; he had to some extent already experienced it in liberal earnings from labour of no brain trial beyond what would be little more than amusement to his boundless capacity, a mere preparation of wing pluming for the mighty soaring of which it was capable. There is every reason to believe with Lord Campbell that he had previously been in London with Walter Roche, his earliest instructor of the Grammar School, who for a while had

It is of small moment whether considerations either of taste, or prudence, or of necessity—probably all—induced Shakespeare so early to seek a livelihood in the centre of English commercial and intellectual activity. Certain it is, he immediately became connected, in some capacity or another, with the stage. This was the profession to which the whole bent of his genius instinctively directed him; it is the only one we find any trace of his having ever embraced in the Metropolis. Circumstances already referred to influenced him in making this choice of a career, even before he had left his native town. We have seen that theatrical companies frequently visited Stratford in the days of his youth, and that several different companies performed

there in the Corporation Hall, during his father's tenure of the office of bailiff in 1569.

On his arrival in London, the Globe on the Bankside, and the Blackfriars Theatre,



The Bloody Tower—Old Tower of London.

belonging to the same company, were the most in vogue. We know that in 1594 he was one of what was called the Lord Chamberlain's servants, who usually performed at the Blackfriars Theatre. This building was raised in 1576, and stood in Play-house Yard, to the east of the present Apothecaries' Hall. The same company built the Globe, Burbage, as the representative of the company, signed a bond for the construction of this theatre December 22nd, 1593. The company performed at the Globe in summer, and at the Blackfriars in winter, until early in the seventeenth century, when the latter house for several years passed out of their hands. Throughout this period they played frequently at Richmond, at the Halls of Gray's Inn and Middle Temple, and at Hatfield House.

During the reign of Elizabeth they were open on Sundays, causing much trouble to Shakespeare, who is reputed to have used his best, though ineffectual, efforts with his partners to prevent this. There were no women in any of the companies, and the female characters were personated by boys, who wore wigs. Such fact is calculated to add to our astonishment at the enchantment which the poet has thrown over his Juliets, and his Rosalinds and his Mirandas.

In March, 1613, Shakespeare purchased a house in the Blackfriars, London, which is described as "abutting upon a street leading down to Puddle Wharf on the east part, right against the King's Majesty's Wardrobe." The price was £140, but of this sum he only paid £80, and mortgaged the premises for the balance. On the mortgage being subsequently paid off, he leased the house for a term of years to John Robinson, whose descendants continued until recent times to inhabit at least the same locality. The counterpart of the indenture by which Shakespeare became possessed of the Blackfriars property leased to Robinson is still to be seen, with his signature attached to it, in the library of the Corporation of the City of London at the Guildhall. To it is attached the only other indisputable signature of Shakespeare at present known to be in existence,

with the exception of the three inserted in his will. The deed of mortgage signed by Shakespeare is also still preserved. In the deeds he is described as "William Shakespeare of Stratforde-upon-Avon, in the Countie of Warwick, gentleman," from which it would appear that by this time,



Old London Stone in Cannon Street.

at all events, he had ceased to reside in London.

In the year 1596 he lived in Southwark, "near the Bear Garden," according to a statement Malone found in a paper which once belonged to Alleyn, the player, but of

which no trace can now be discovered. In a subsidy roll, dated October 1st, 1558, he is assessed on property of the value of £5 in the parish of St. Helen's, Bishopsgate; but we cannot therefore conclude that he ever resided in that district; and most probably he did not long retain the property itself, whatever it may have been, as his name does not appear in a similar document drawn up two years afterwards. It is quite certain that any establishment he maintained in London was always of an unpretending and most inexpensive description, and that throughout his life, but more especially from the period of his purchase of New Place in 1597, he did not consider the Metropolis as his settled place of abode, but wished to be known as William Shakespeare, gentleman, of Stratford-upon-Avon.

Burbage, the first Hamlet, was manager, at that time the drama was generally interpreted in inn yards, the most famous of the kind in the City being the Bull in Bishopsgate Street. That Shakespeare's company played in the Bull, or that he was resident in Bishopsgate, in 1589, seems clear from the assessment roll for the levying of subsidies in that year; for as there was a portion of the Bull situated in that parish, his name appears as subjected, on an assessment of £5, to a rate of 13s. 4d.; but whether while he lived in this parish, until he removed to Southwark in 1612-13, the poet attended St. Helen's Church, is merely founded upon a conjecture of probability, for the records of the vestry from 1568 to 1676 have been lost. As, however, Crosby Hall, in the vicinity, figures twice or thrice



St. Helen's
Priory

The neighbourhood of St. Helen's, Bishopsgate, is specially associated with Shakespeare, and recently a memorial window has been placed in St. Helen's Church by an anonymous donor. It is the custom of the Rev. Dr. Cox, the earnest vicar in charge of St. Helen's, should he find any stranger after the morning service on Sunday showing an interest in the many and interesting monuments in the old church, to accompany any such persons round the church and explain their associations. One Sunday morning he officiated in this way to an unknown gentleman, and narrated to him Shakespeare's connection with Bishopsgate. Of this not many memorials have come down, but its reality is beyond a doubt. As Dr. Cox has it, Shakespeare came to London in 1586, when he was twenty-one years of age, and was probably in some way associated with the company of comedians, of which

in "Richard III.," it is evident that Shakespeare was acquainted with the church and its surroundings.

The poet's daily habits during his stay in the busy centre of English life, and the friendships which he there formed, are little known to us through any actual transmission of details, but we will believe he led a life consistent with his early training by a good mother. He had left his wife and children behind in Stratford, most likely at the time of setting out purposing to bring his family up to London so soon as he should get established there. Finding, however, that during the dull seasons he could get away from the Metropolis and join his family in Stratford, he availed himself of this course, and, in all probability, whenever opportunity offered, he did so. His brother Edmund being with him in London, and making a home together, he was enabled to enjoy

domestic life to a degree he could not otherwise have done. Many biographers would lead us to believe that his life in town was such as some of his associate actors are known to have led; but there is no tittle of evidence in proof of his ever indulging in the slightest dissipation, or to have been in the company of the more reckless of the class of actors outside of theatrical duties. On the contrary, Burbage, Alleyn, and men of this stamp, in every case well-conducted and married gentlemen, are proved to have been his

unrestrained moments, under the familiar name of "Will," and that in their more serious moods he was for them the "gentle" Shakespeare.

His stage performances, whenever personated for purpose of illustration, were of the highest class of the time. In the list of the principal comedians who performed in 1598, in Ben Jonson's "Every Man in his Humour," our dramatist's name stands first. A close friendship must have subsisted between Ben Jonson and Shakespeare, and tradition speaks



THE DEVIL TAVERN, AND TEMPLE BAR, AS A WOODEN STRUCTURE: FROM AN OLD PRINT.

associates. For further proof of his goodness of life during the intervals of his absences in London, we need only recur to the fertile products of his brain, unceasing as these were during the whole period, and we find the most distinct proof of labour and diligence to an extent entirely corroborative.

Of his personal demeanour we learn little more than that he was a man of courteous and flowing address, and of an easy and sociable temper. It is strong verification of his companionable character that he was his associates, in their more

of an important service rendered by the latter to the former in procuring a reception by the theatrical managers of Jonson's first play, which they had just superciliously rejected.

THE TAVERNS.

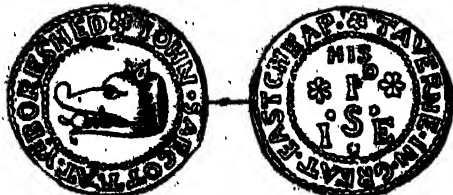
The Taverns of old London and Southwark existing at the time of Shakespeare's arrival in London, must, under any circumstances, form important features in the biographies of eminent literary characters, such as Shakespeare himself and Jonson, who there shone so luminously at the time. These taverns were the life of many of the noted men of the time; in frequenting them they knew their

company, and his as much at ease as in their own homes. It was in social contact here abounding that the great master found characters large within the bounds of human probability, and which the ideal humourist, and which his contemporaries tried to draw but could not. Jonson was far more of a tavern man than Shakespeare. The Devil Tavern at old Temple Bar was a chief resort.

"Rare Ben," according to Sweet Robert Herrick, did not confine his patronage to the "Mermaid," his presence was well known at other such resorts of his time. Herrick thus names them :—

"Ah, Ben,
Say how, or when
Shall we, thy guests,
Meet at those lyric feasts,
Made at the Sun,
The Dog, the Triple Tun ?
Where we such clusters had
As made us nobly wild, not mad ;
And yet each verse of thine
Outdid the meat, outdid the frolic wine.
My Ben,
Or come again,
Or send to us
Thy wit's great overplus ;
But teach us yet
Wisely to husband it ;
Lest we that talent spend,
And having once brought to an end
That precious stock, the store
Of such a wit, the world should have no more."

Reigning over all was the "Devil Tavern," at Temple Bar. In this "house of joy" was the noted Apollo room, in which



Copper tokens issued at the Boar's Head Tavern.

the club founded by him held their saturnalia. Ben drew up certain "Convivial Laws" for this, his favoured society of brethren, and which were cut in gilt letters on a block of black marble let into the wall over the chimney piece. It would puzzle the best Latin scholar to express more tersely the intentions of the club :—

"Idioti, insulsi, tristes, turpis, abesto ;
Eruditi, urbani, hilares, honesti, adiscuntor ;
Nec lecte feminæ repellantor.

Convivia nec multi nec loquaces suntu,
Fidicen, nial acervicus, non benito,
Inspida poemata nullis recitantor.
Veritas scribere nullus cogitor.

Legislation there might perhaps be made, but it was a place of merriment, of merriment, of merriment, of merriment, of merriment.

Focus parentis esto.

John Addington Symonds, in his "Life of Ben Jonson," has thus admirably rendered the inscription :—

"Let the dullard, the ass, the sad-faced, the level fellow, keep away ;

The learned, urbane, merry, good fellows, be welcome ;

Nor let choice women be excluded.

The guests should be neither dumb nor garrulous.
No fiddler, except on invitation, shall attend.
No tasteless poems shall be read,
No one shall be forced to write verses.
To throw cups, break glasses, smash windows,
Tear the furniture to pieces, shall be accounted for a crime.

The fire upon the hearth must always burn."

It may be said of the old taverns dating of Shakespeare's day, that in an age when clubs did not exist, the tavern bore a higher reputation than its name now implies. It corresponded to the coffee-house of Dryden and Pope's epoch, and fulfilled a purpose to which no institution of the present day in England exactly answers. The tavern differed from the private club, inasmuch as its door stood open to all the world, and yet its holiest of holies, the sanctuary of such men as Shakespeare and Jonson, was only accessible by aspirants to literary society, upon invitation. It was at once exclusive of the common vulgar, and democratic for all who could contribute something to the intellectual fund. Lords, poets, men of learning, actors, fashionable fribblers, and wine drawers, met together on a common basis of intense life there. Regarded from this point of view, the Elizabethan London tavern, as a social institution of peculiar efficiency, drew its origin from wandering students of the Middle Ages. Their chief poet sang :—

"Meum est propositum
In taberna mori."

"It is my intention," said the arch bard of those early humanists and rollicking Bohemians, "to die in a tavern, for there, as to the brightest spot on earth, the angels will descend, and cry in chorus, 'May God be gracious to this toper.'" The age was one allowed to wine rather than to chocolate and coffee—those later growths of our modern civilization. And the tavern had the defect of its quality. It encouraged an excess in liquors, from which, among many others, poor Ben suffered.

A great resort of the literary heroes of the age was the Mermaid Tavern, where a host had been founded by Sir Walter Raleigh, and here Elizabeth's favourite knight, with Shakespeare, Jonson, Beau-

mont, Fletcher, Camden, Selden, and others enjoyed "the feast of reason and the flow of soul." There were others of nearly equal celebrity, such as the Boar's Head, the Falcon, and others. It would be most unjust to infer that the great dramatist's presence at either or any of these social evenings at taverns, to meet men of such distinctive eminence as we know him to have companioned with, entailed any departure from sobriety. It was the invariable custom of the time for gentlemen of every degree to spend their evenings at such resorts, and the custom continued until the early part of the present century. Every man had his tavern, where he was tolerably sure to be found in the evening, after the close of the day's business, it was, in fact, his club; and, as newspapers

could hardly be said to exist, it was in these taverns the current topics of the time were made known and discussed. The "Mermaid," and the other taverns named, were the known headquarters of the then literary world. Not to have frequented them would have invited a condition of mental darkness so far as concerned the outer world.

This Southwark side, rich as it is in memories of Shakespeare, was to him doubly sacred through its more than associations of Chaucer and Gower: the one reposed in the grand old Gothic pile, at foot of the bridge, the other endeared it as the grand setting-out quarters of the pilgrims, whose descriptive record is given with a simplicity which shall endear it for ever to the hearts of the whole Anglo-Saxon race. When Shakespeare lived in Southwark he would meet Spencer, Beaumont, and Fletcher, who were his immediate neighbours. Ben Jonson, too, was near at hand, and it needs no stretch of imagination to find a group of these five mighty unsurpassed spirits sitting together at the "Tabard" or "Talbot," in the very chamber where their illustrious predecessor of two centuries earlier had drawn his wondrous inspirations. There it stood, in the ancient causeway, which served two thousand years earlier as the main road between Roman London and the coast ports. Becket's death and canonization

had converted this end of the causeway into a series of inns, where the pilgrims to



From sketch formerly possessed by Mr. Uppott, traditioned as the noted Mermaid of Ben Jonson and Shakespeare.

mont, Fletcher, Camden, Selden, and others enjoyed "the feast of reason and the flow of soul." There were others of nearly equal celebrity, such as the Boar's Head, the Falcon, and others. It would be most unjust to infer that the great dramatist's presence at either or any of these social evenings at taverns, to meet men of such distinctive eminence as we know him to have companioned with, entailed any departure from sobriety. It was the invariable custom of the time for gentlemen of every degree to spend their evenings at such resorts, and the custom continued until the early part of the present century. Every man had his tavern, where he was tolerably sure to be found in the evening, after the close of the day's business, it was, in fact, his club; and, as newspapers



Carved head, expertly built into the wall of the Boar's Head Tavern; there was also a similar sign hung out.

the shrine at Canterbury could be taken care of and lodged in a manner worthy

of sanctity, and with comfort such as old Southwark alone seemed able to offer. These true hostelry homes had become famous over the whole world, and old Stow, in 1598, several centuries after their establishment, speaks of them as "many fair inns for receipt of travellers." How would Chaucer's words rise to their memories as they rested to refresh, as they would, in a room, then well known as his resort:—

Befel, that in that season, on a day
In Southwark, at "The Tabard," as I lay,
Ready to wendon on my pilgrimage
To Canterbury with devout courage,
At night was come into that hostelry
Well, nine and twenty in a company



One of the earliest-known taverns in Southwark: from an old print.

Of sundry folk, by adventure yfall
In fellowship, and pilgrims were they all,
That toward Canterbury wolden ride.

The quaint and ingenious Fuller, who belonged to a succeeding generation, thus characterizes the two great dramatists as they appeared at these brilliant reunions: "Many were the wit-combats betwixt him (Shakespeare) and Ben Jonson, which two I behold like a Spanish great ga'leon and an English man-of-war. Master Jonson, like the former, was built far higher in learning, solid but slow in his performances; Shakespeare, with the English man-of-war, lesser in bulk, but lighter in sailing, could turn with all tides, tack about and take advantage of all winds, by the quickness of his wit and invention." An anecdote from "Merry Passages and

Jeasts," compiled by Sir Nicholas Lestrange during the Civil Wars, and preserved in the Harleian MSS., is worthy of mention. The authority given for it is the poet Donne. The metal *latten*, on which the point of the joke turns, was an alloy resembling brass closely in appearance and composition. "Shakespeare was godfather to one of Ben Jonson's children, and after the christening, being in a deepe study, Jonson came to cheere him up, and askt him why he was so melancholy. 'No, faith, Ben,' sayes he, 'not I; but I have beene considering a great while what should be the fittest gift for me to bestow upon my godchild, and I have

resolved at last.' 'I prithee what?' sayes he. 'I faith, Ben, I'll *den* give him a dosen good Lattin spoones, and thou shalt translate them.' Jonson, it is well known, was a good classical scholar, and even something of a pedant.

Prior to the building of theatres, such as the Globe and Blackfriars, specially devoted to the early drama, theatrical performances in London and its neighbourhood were given in the yards of the old inns. The earliest and largest of these was "The Tabard" in High Street, Southwark, on the approach to the Bridge, and was so called from a jacket or sleeveless coat, whole before, open on both sides, with a square collar, winged at the shoulders. It was a stately garment of the olden time, commonly worn of noble

men and others, both at home and abroad, in the wars, with their arms embroidered thereon, that every man by his coat of arms might be known from others. Later on, these tabards were worn only by the heralds. The name of the dress was kept in remembrance by the Tabarders, as certain scholars are entered at Queen's College, Oxford. Since about 1750, the Tabard, or Talbot, of Chaucer's "Canterbury Pilgrims," became a chief inn for carriers and posting, and was greatly frequented by the farmers and others coming up to London from Kent and Surrey.

Near to the "Tabard" stood another quaint old hostelry, called the "Bell"; pilgrims resorted hither when the more renowned house overflowed. Chaucer mentions "the gentil hostellerie that heichte the 'Tabard' as being faste by the 'Bell.'" There was also the "Sun and Hare," "The Three Brushes," or, "Holy Water Sprinklers," and the "Three Widows." The "George," also, was close at hand. In Shakespeare's time it was called "The St. George." Stow mentions it as an inn from which tokens were issued in 1554. In 1670 it was mainly burnt down, and in the great fire of Southwark, whatever remained of the old inn was consumed.

The "White Hart," another ancient inn on the same side of the High Street, is also referred to by Stow. This was also a resort of pilgrims, and, like others in the same immediate neighbourhood, suffered at various times from destruction by fire, each being rebuilt as much as possible to resemble the former existing structure. It is related in Fabyan's "Chronicles" that, "on July 1st, 1450, Jack Cade arrived in Southwark, where he lodged at the 'Hart,' for he might not be suffered to enter the city."

Eastcheap boasted the most celebrated inn, the "Boar's Head," which formed a part of Sir John Fastaff's benefactions to Magdalen College, Oxford. Sir John was one of the bravest generals in the French wars under Henry IV. and his successors. This "Boar's Head" of Shakspeare's time was

unquestionably a great resort of the better class of tavern-frequenters, and especially of persons attached to the theatres.

Another hostelry of marked note of the time and same locality, was the "Catherine Wheel," situated opposite St. George's Church, and was a great resort of pilgrims. The sign was adopted, and this was the first and always the chief hotel of the bearers of the badge of the order of the



One of the most celebrated inns in Southwark.

Knights of St. Catherine of Mount Sinai, formed in the year 1063, for the protection of pilgrims on their way to and from the Holy Sepulchre. Hence, it was a suggestive, if not an eloquent sign for an inn, intimating that the host was of the brotherhood, and would protect the traveller from robbery in his inn—in the shape of high charges and exactions—just as the knights protected them on the highroad from robbery. These knights wore a white habit embroidered with a Catherine wheel (*i.e.*, a wheel armed with spikes), and traversed with a sword stained with blood. The Puritans afterwards changed it into the "Cat and Wheel," Bristol being the place exhibiting a sign under that new title. There are copper

tokens in good preservation of each of these inns, although the buildings themselves may now be said, with exception of here and there back outbuildings, to have all disappeared since the year 1800, prior to which each was represented by a building bearing the old name, and conformed more or less to what was known of the originals.

There is no notice of the "Boar's Head" tavern in any edition of Shakespeare previous to Theobald's, in 1733, but that the locality is there accurately given from an old and genuine tradition is rendered certain by an allusion to "Sir John of the 'Boare's Head,' in Eastcheap," in Gayton's "Festivous

Hed, in Eastcheap," *Liber Familiaris* of Sir James Whitelocke, sub anno 1588. In 1600 the lords of the Council gave permission for the servants of the Earls of Oxford and Worcester to play at his house. There were numerous other known taverns in London and the country, including five taverns in the City, known by the name of the "Boar's Head," but the one in Eastcheap was totally destroyed in the great fire of 1666, and no genuine representation of it is known to exist.

Haliwell Phillips is admitted to have been an enthusiastic burrower among old archives likely to yield Shakespearean spoil of any



The Catherine
Wheel

Notes, 1654," page 277. Shakespeare never mentions the tavern at all, and the only possible allusion to it is in the second part of "Henry IV.," where the Prince asks, speaking of Falstaff:—"Doth the old boar feed in the old frank?" The "Boar's Head" was an inn as early as 1537, when it is expressly demised in a lease as all that tavern called the "Boar's Hedde," "cum cellariis sollariis et aliis, suis pistinentiis, in Estchepe, in parochia Sancti Michaelis predicti, in tenura Johanne Broke, vidue." About the year 1588 it was kept by one Thomas Wright, a native of Shrewsbury. "George Wrighte, sun of Thomas Wrighte, of London, vintner, that dwelt at the 'Boar's

kind. He has left behind him facts we cannot over-appreciate. Time, however, will determine their ultimate value. It must, however, be admitted that in numerous instances he has arrived at conclusions and has put forward statements for which he utterly fails to give any reasonable ground. He tells us that the actors of the period of Shakespeare's first arrival in London "were, as a rule, individual wanderers, spending a large portion of their time at a distance from their families; and there is every reason for believing that this was the case with Shakespeare from the period of his arrival in London until nearly the end of his life." The writer contends that nothing can be

wider of the truth than this unwarranted statement, which calls upon the world to believe that Shakespeare and the eminent artists whom we know to have worked with him were of a class inferior to the troupes who now wander in their caravans between the small towns in England, in which theatricals beyond those of most unfinished class are unknown. He further informs us that, after getting to London, "books of many kinds would have been accessible to him," and that he "would have been almost daily within hearing of the best dramatic poetry of the age."

If Phillips' study of Shakespeare's knowledge of men and books, and of an education



THE SWAN THEATRE AT STRATFORD, WILTS.
The second building, opened by Richard Burbage, A.D. 1613

carried on and completed in Stratford Grammar School on a basis than which none higher existed in England, led him to the belief that it compelled him to come to London to obtain a first access to books, and to hear for the first time of dramatic poetry, then, indeed, will the biographical remarks which he has interspersed in his mountains of collected material, take the archaeological shape, to which such unappreciative estimate of the great poet's education and mind will most assuredly relegate his efforts as a biographer. He further adds:—"Books in most parts of the country were of very rare occurrence. Lilly's Grammar and a few classical works, chained to the desks of the Free School, were, probably, the

only volumes of the kind to be found in Stratford-upon-Avon, exclusive of Bibles, church services, psalters, and educational manuals. *There were certainly not more than two or three dozen books, if so many, in the whole town.*"

Such statements as these detract vastly from Phillips' researches. So far from earnest readers following so blind a lead, the very opposite is taken. Barbarism did not reign in the poet's native town save in the matter of uncleansed gutters, and in this failing they erred not more than did far larger and more important cities. The bright boy Will, insatiable for knowledge, drank not from a cup chained to his desk, neither reigned the utter desolation of literature, rendering his feet being of necessity set in Southwark's Borough to make "a first acquaintance with books, and to hear, for the first time, of dramatic poetry." This is giving the great magician of the world a very "back scat," such as none but an Ignatius Donnelly will award him. The world has read of Burbage, Alleyn, Hemings, Condell, Lowin, Taylor, Field, and others, his friends and associates, all distinguished in their several rôles, many of whom were educationally and professionally equal to the most eminent actors of the present or the centuries that have rolled by since their time, not one of whom, whether regarded as scholars or professional actors, should, in common justice, be graded lower. Shall we pass into oblivion the classic, finished powers of Alleyn, and the noble dealing with wealth acquired by professional labours, devoted so nobly to the cause of education, the blessings of which shall shine forth with increasing power and effectiveness until time shall be no more; and who, in the opening of his college at Dulwich, in 1619, had the satisfaction of recording in his diary, "this day was the foundation of the college finisht," and so, in the quaint words of old Fuller:—"He who out-acted others in his life, out-did himself before his death"? His modest words, "God's Gift College, founded and endowed by Edward Alleyn, to the honour and glory of Almighty God, and in a thankful remembrance of His gifts and blessings bestowed upon me," will for ever retain their hold in the hearts of an appreciative people.

Alleyn was blest in worldly possessions, and in being the chosen instrument of their usage to the honour and glory of God. Since his time few actors have been permitted the gathering-up of much earthly store, but of

their substance, be what it may, all have been generous to a fault. Shakespeare, as is named several times in this volume, was not a professional actor; he made it his duty as author of plays needing special capabilities in their actors, practically and in person to illustrate his marvellous instructions in *Hamlet*: hence the mixing up.

It is interesting to trace the growth of stage theatricals in Shakespeare's day, the class of buildings used for the purpose, their

in depth it was to extend over half the space of the internal area. Three tiers of galleries occupied three sides of the house, and there were four boxes, partitioned off from the lower gallery, which were frequented by company of rank, and to these the admission charge was higher. There were other divisions for company of an inferior order in the upper tiers. The number of theatres in London rapidly increased with the Blackfriars. There was one in Whitefriars, in or



The Fortune Theatre, formerly situate in Golden Lane, and then styled "Master Alleyn's Fortune Theatre."

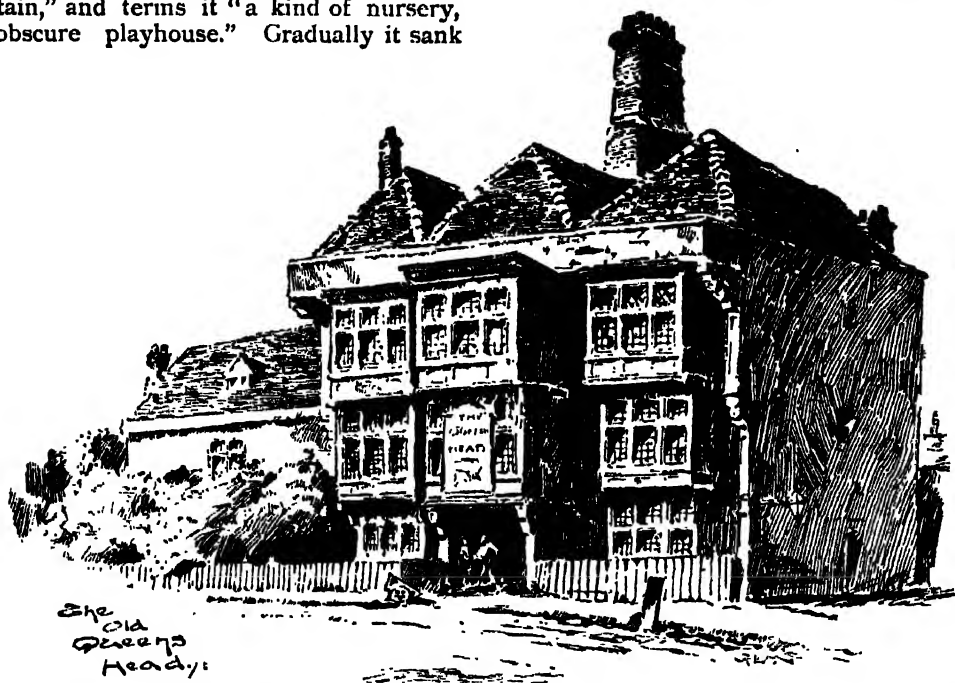
dimensions, and the manner of conducting the performances. Henslow and Alleyn's contract for the building of the Fortune Playhouse in 1599 gives us a pretty accurate idea of its dimensions; and that document insists on the Fortune being built, though somewhat larger, yet like the Globe. The contract for the Fortune stipulated for the erection of a building of four equal external sides of eighty feet, reduced by necessary arrangements to an internal area of fifty-five feet square. The length of the stage from side to side was to be forty-three feet, and

near Salisbury Court, and another called the Curtain in Shoreditch, the Red Bull at the upper end of St. John Street, the Cockpit or Phoenix in Drury Lane, and the Fortune was situated in Whitcross Street; there was also an ancient theatre at Newington. There were other theatres of minor importance—the Swan, the Rose, and the Hope. Each was distinguished by a sign indicative of its name; that on the Globe was a figure of Hercules supporting the Globe, and underwritten was the motto, "*Totus mundus agit histrionem.*"

"The Curtain Theatre," so called from having been the first house that used the green curtain, and another of the earliest, known as "The Theatre," both stood in what was called Curtain Road, near St. Leonard's Church, Shoreditch, celebrated for an annual sermon "On the wonderful works of God in the Creation," and for which money was bequeathed by a gardener named Fairchild. This theatre is mentioned as early as 1577, *i.e.*, prior to Shakespeare's arrival in London. It is referred to in a sermon preached at Paul's Cross in 1578, and also by Stubbs in his "Anatomie of Abuses" in 1583. In 1662 it was occupied by Prince Charles's actors. Aubrey, in 1678, calls it the "Green Curtain," and terms it "a kind of nursery, or obscure playhouse." Gradually it sank

situate to claim monastic privileges—*i.e.*, they were outside the jurisdiction of the Lord Mayor and Aldermen. In 1575 players were entirely expelled from the city limit. The edict, however, only had the effect of increasing their numbers outside, and, as would seem, under appellations of more dignity. There are several candidatures for the honour of Shakespeare's first appearance on "the boards." A letter to Lord Walsingham shows that in 1586 the different companies known as the Queen's, Lord Leicester's, Lord Oxford's, Lord Nottingham's, and other noblemen, then performing in the Metropolis, amounted to two hundred.

The Blackfriars, situate on the site now



This old hostelry was situate at Islington, and much resorted to by literary men on occasions of complimentary dinners.

into obscurity, and, like some others, degenerated into a place for boxing matches. Maitland, in his "London," (1772), mentions some remains of the "Curtain" as then standing.

"The Theatre," situate close by the Curtain, the Blackfriars, Whitefriars, Salisbury Court, Rose, Hope, Swan, Newington, Red Bull, and Cockpit or Phoenix, and in addition to these, various inn-yards, were all on the Middlesex side of the Thames, and a large number of the actors of these theatres resided in Holywell Lane, Shoreditch. Most of these Middlesex-side theatres were

known as Playhouse Yard, near Blackfriars Bridge, the spot where the *Times* newspaper is printed, on the Middlesex side of the Thames, and the Globe on the Surrey side, close to St. Mary Overie and London Bridge, were the two theatres in which Shakespeare was concerned in conjunction with Richard Burbage, the friend and partner with whom he became identified almost immediately on his arrival in London. Their friendship had commenced in Stratford, and gradually ripened into business relations, which culminated in his migration to London. No doubt they had been concerned together for several years

prior to it being necessitous that Shakespeare's work in the enterprise should be given personally on the spot. At the time of their conducting the Blackfriars, there were two companies holding the right of playing in the one that Shakespeare's company belonged to, the Lord Chamberlain's and that of the Children of the Chapel, afterwards, on James's accession, known as the Children of her Majesty's Revels, who played regular pieces the same as their older rivals—such as Ben Jonson's "Case is Altered" in 1599, and his "Cynthia's Revels" in 1600. The proprietor of the Blackfriars in fee was Richard Burbage, who let the theatre to the Children of the Revels for the

in our old plan of London, and close by the Bear Gardens, and in it many of Shakespeare's plays were first produced. The building existing previously having been destroyed by fire, we now know, from De Witt's drawing, which was recently discovered in Germany, precisely the character of the building. A stage was erected for the actors, but except arras curtains at the back and sides there were no scenes or other accessories. For the spectators there were tiers of boxes and a gallery for the ladies, and a pit for the men, in which all stood. The stage was strewn with rushes, and the assuming more aristocratic, as the critics, sat on stools by the side, taking their refresh-



ST. MARY OVERY IN SHAKESPEARE'S TIME: FROM AN OLD PRINT.

summer months, he and his brother proprietors managing and playing at the Globe, on the Surrey side. The absurd idea that Shakespeare came to London a stranger, driven by the necessities of his family, and that to obtain a living had to submit to menial offices of the humblest class, will not hold in the minds of reasoning men. He came more effectually to conduct in person labour daily growing, and which nothing but personal presence could possibly supervise.

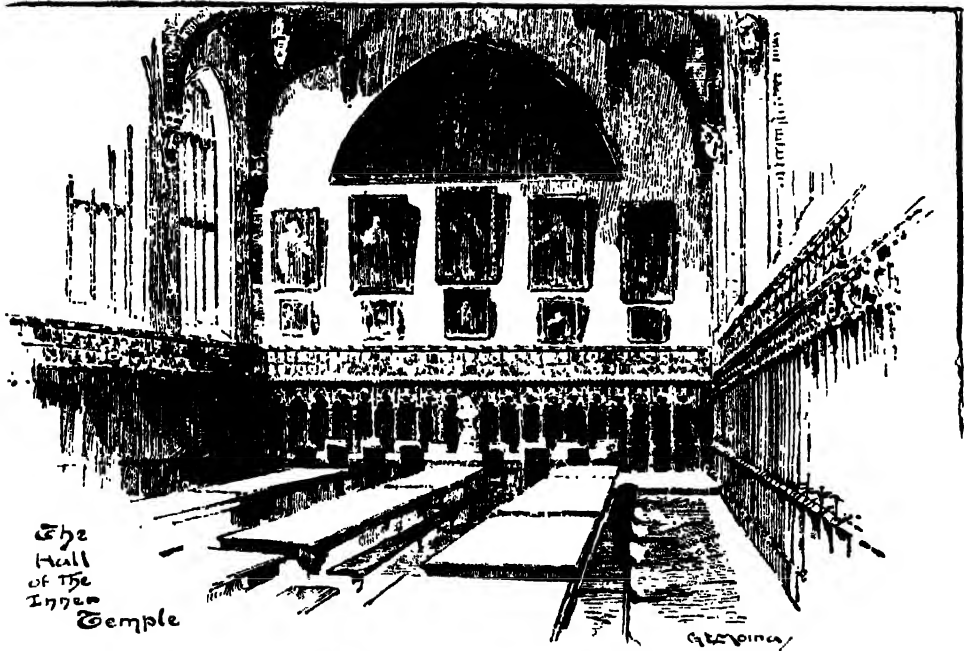
Within a year of Shakespeare arriving in London, the new Globe Theatre, built from the "wood and timber" of the theatre at Finsbury Fields, was opened by Richard Burbage and his brother Cuthbert at Bank-side, near St. Saviour's Church, as shown

ments, and, as is stated, smoking; but we are not informed as to whether the term "refreshments" permitted any drinking. Every one had good view of the actors, who could not have been more than ten to twelve yards from the most distant spectators. The women's parts were invariably played by boys. The charge for admission to the boxes was about eighteenpence, to the pit a penny, or, on special occasions, twopence. Ben Jonson's "Every Man in his Humour" was one of the first plays performed at the Globe. Shakespeare's comedy, "As You Like It," was brought out there soon afterwards with the greatest success. It is pretty certain that he borrowed the plot from a novel, "Rosalynde," by Thomas Lodge,

published in 1590, but the inimitable characters of the melancholy Jaques, the witty Touchstone and his Audrey, "a poor virgin, an ill-favoured thing, but mine own," are unquestionably Shakespeare's own creation. "Much Ado About Nothing" was entered by the Stationers' Company at the same time as "As You Like It." "Twelfth Night," the perfection of English comedy, and the most fascinating drama in the English language, was brought out in the same year. It is on record that this play was performed before the benchers in the hall of the Middle Temple, and conjecture points to

earliest to discover and acknowledge his greatness, was brought into friendship with members of the Hall, the which, by its immediate vicinity to the Blackfriars and Globe Theatres, was most accessible, as were its hospitalities generous and ever open. Both Halls seemed specially desirous, even in this early time, to claim him as their guest, for, as great lawyers do not need "tuft-hunting associates," so they needed not any but "the man himself."

In our present day, there are small minds who have enough of wisdom in gauging their own intellect as to know they can never



Lord Bacon is traditioned as assisting with Shakespeare in a performance in this hall.

Shakespeare's intimacy with Bacon at the time, as both are reputed to have aided in its production, and that most likely Shakespeare took a part in its performance.

Prior to the production of either of Shakespeare's plays at the Middle Temple, Old Gray's Inn Hall had made his acquaintance, and can boast of him as a frequent guest. One of his early plays was first produced there, but it is not known which. Lord Bacon is said to have joined him on the occasions of his visits to the Hall. The Middle Temple can claim closer friendship with the great poet, who, as a personal friend of the lord of Hatfield, a devoted admirer of Shakespeare's then developing genius, and who is traditioned as one of the

become great lawyers, and so must acquire notoriety at any hazard. It is believed that a few of this class are to be found on the surface of Old Gray's Inn, and, who, in their devotion to the wisdom of the great philosopher, Lord Bacon, a member of their Inn, have been stirring the fire to see whether they can find renegades of sufficiently limited brain capacity to hoist a Shakespeare dethronement flag within the precincts of the loyal old inn. Outsiders can judge as to any such proselytizing. We would not like to be preachers of such crusade. As one of England's greatest lawyers has said: "Porcine honour, such as it is, should not be despised, but who shall weigh it in the scale against an embodiment of the wisdom of the world?"

It is not intended to impute to the then civic powers any want of appreciation of Shakespeare or any desire to prevent the performance of his plays; their action resulted from a becoming desire to stay the assembling of loose women and their associates within their jurisdiction, which had become public scandal in the localities around the minor theatres: the stages devoted to Shakespearean performances appear free of the objectionable element. It was at the

exhibition of retributive villainy, or the defence of injured innocence, he stops at the due moment, never overstepping the modesty of nature. The scene closes, the character is dropped the moment the actor requires it, and however just in tone, or exquisite the conception, it falls back into the void of the past from which it had been summoned, often to the greatest regret of the reader and spectator, but with no apparent regret on the part of the poet. Artists and painters in general have their likes as strong, but not always the same, as the admirers of their work, they can rarely work successfully without such prejudices. It is natural for the artist to fall in love with his own crea-



time recognised that all his plays were on the right side of morality, and that he never used the theatre to excite personal prejudice. No poet was ever less personal, or mixed up with his more admired creations less of his personal predilections. It would seem impossible to select any one character from the whole range of his *dramatis personæ*, of which it can be said, this was a favourite with the poet. In the full torrent of his arg, or the excitement of his eloquence, in the peaceful

tions, and natural that what he loves, and all admire, he should repeat in various shapes. But in Shakespeare this never happens. If the unfeeling, the cruel, and the vicious are not unmitigated monsters in his pages, it is because they are human, not because his sympathies would have concealed their deformities. It is because even the toad, ugly and venomous, wears yet a precious jewel in its head. No vice in this life is beyond redemption: no virtue without its flaws.

His contemporaries, Edward Alleyn and Richard Burbage, were accustomed to appear very generally in the more elevated impersonations, while Kemp was the great comic favourite of theatrical audiences at the same epoch. Alleyn, the founder of Dulwich College, was the leading actor of the

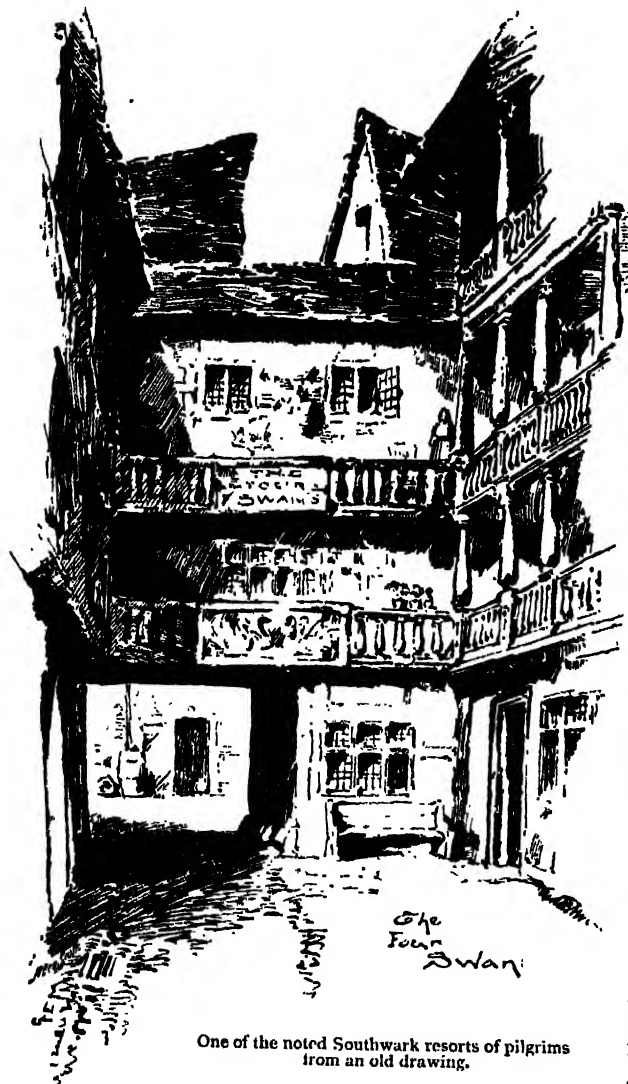
first representative of the principal characters in all the poet's greatest dramas. From an "Elegy" on Burbage, which seems to have been written immediately after his death, we learn that he was the original Hamlet, Romeo, Prince Henry, and Henry V., Richard III., Macbeth, Brutus, Coriolanus, Shylock, Lear, Pericles, and Othello. It was no doubt in reference to his personal appearance that the Queen in the last act of "Hamlet" gives us this very unpoetical image of her son: "He's fat and scant o' breath."

Ben Jonson gives the names of the principal actors in his plays, but his lists never state what was the particular part sustained by any individual performer. In 1598 Shakespeare represented one of the characters in Jonson's "Every Man in his Humour," and in 1603 he played in the same writer's "Sejanus." This is the last record we have of his appearance on the stage, and it is probable that he soon afterwards renounced the profession of an actor, if he ever could be so classed: we contend that he assumed parts in plays mainly as an instructor to others.

Throughout the whole of this great productive era of the English drama, players were discountenanced by the gravest as by the most active and influential portion of the nation; but they found some compensation for this discredit in the countenance extended to them by the Court, and still more in the enthusiastic support and favour of the great mass of the people. Elizabeth and James I. were both patrons of the drama, and they both recognised in Shakespeare the foremost dramatic writer of his age. Ben Jonson, in his verses prefixed to the Shakespeare Folio of 1623,

bears a sort of general testimony to the delight which these two Sovereigns took in the productions of the poet's genius:—

"Sweet Swan of Avon, what a sight it were
To see thee in our waters yet appear,
And make those flights upon the banks of Thames
That so did take Eliza and our James!"



One of the noted Southwark resorts of pilgrims from an old drawing.

company of which Henslowe seems to have been the principal manager or capitalist, or the Lord Admiral's Servants, as they were at one time called. Burbage was associated with Shakespeare as one of the servants of the Lord Chamberlain, and upon him devolved the distinction of having been the

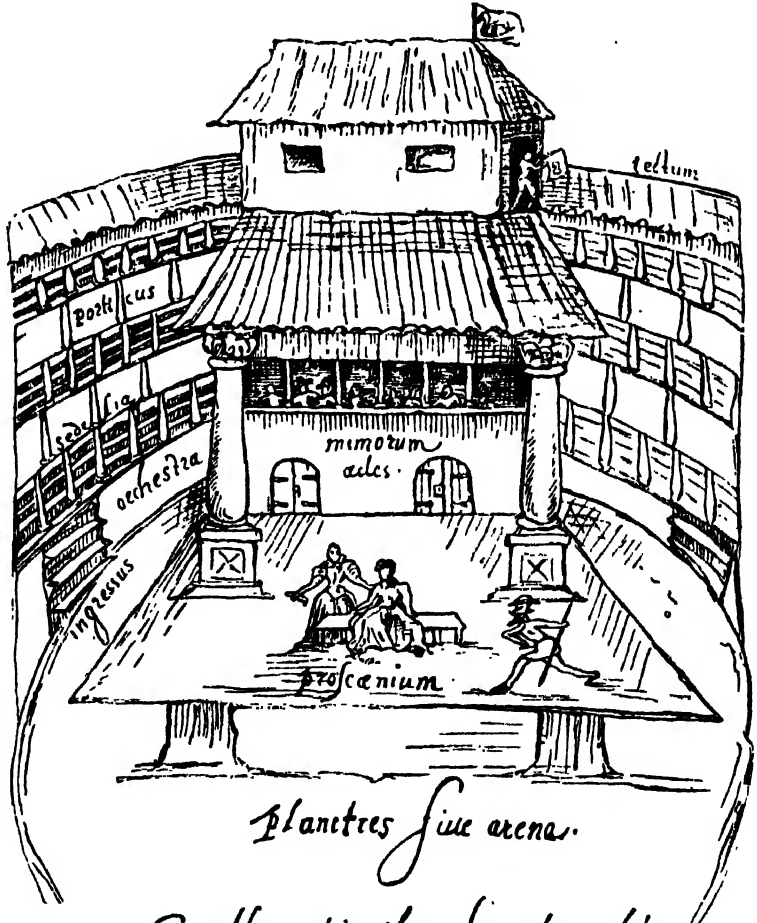
Recently we have been brought as it were close to Shakespeare by the discovery of the first authentic representation of the interior of an old English theatre, dating from 1596. This most interesting drawing is contained in a quarto MS. preserved in the University library at Utrecht under the title:—

"A. van Buchell. Aanteekeningen van den meest verschillenden aard; excerpten uit handschriften en boeken enz. enz. Op. pag. 132 geteekende Afbeelding van het theater genaamt de Zwann te London (c. 1600)."

Underneath the quaint delineation, of which we present a fac-simile, stand the words: "Ex observationibus Londinen sibus Johannis de Witt." Karl Blind has translated the subject in "The Academy."

Of original drawings of London playhouses in Shakespeare's time very few have come down to us; and those show only the less important part—namely, the outside of the buildings. The earliest inner view, which represents the Red Bull Theatre, dates from 1662; that is, more than half a century after Shakespeare's withdrawal and forty-six years after his death. Now, here we have—as Dr. Gädertz, the eminent German Shakespearean scholar, proves by a well-connected chain of arguments—a pen and ink drawing, somewhat faded through age, whose date must be fixed at 1596, when our greatest dramatist of all nations and all ages was still alive. Unfortunately, De Witt, a Dutch scholar, who made it a point during his journeys to enter into relations with all prominent scholars and artists, had no opportunity of seeing Shakespeare himself, who had in that very year retired to Stratford. Here again, as usual, the immortal cludes actual personal touch.

The interior of the Swan Theatre ("cujus intersignium est cygnus; vulgo te theatre off te cijn")—which could seat 3,000 persons under cover, not counting the pit (but this statement appears to err largely on the side of excess) or yard, where spectators stood in the open air—is likened in the MS. to a Roman amphitheatre. To judge from the representation, it was of oval form, in accordance with the allusion in "Henry V." to the Globe Theatre ("this



Planities sive arena.
Ex observationibus Londinen sibus
Johannis De witt

Facsimile of the recent discovery of drawing by De Witt.

wooden O"). The actual stage was in the open air. It was square, constructed of wood resting on colossal blocks, the two front ones of which are visible in de Witt's drawing. We see on the stage two actresses, apparently a queen and a lady of the court, in the dress of Elizabeth's time. A messen-

ger with a martial Henri Quatre beard, lance or staff in hand, runs up to them with a seven-league stride. At the back of the scene is the "tiringhouse" (*mimorum ædes*) its projecting roof supported by two large high columns with capitals. The first story of the tiring-house is divided into boxes separated by columns. There we observe ("over the stage in the lord's rooms") distinguished persons or unoccupied actors looking at the performance. A small upper story above the tiring-house—covered like the latter with straw or bulrushes—rises beyond the roofing of the amphitheatrical galleries, which are also adorned with many columns. From this upper turret, where a banner floats with the sign of the "Swan," the Thames could, no doubt be seen. There are two windows and



Facsimile of woodcut of the Pyramus and Thisbe story discovered with the MS. of De Witt, presumed to have been executed by Luis Cranach.

a door in it; at the door a trumpeter stands, who gives the "three soundings" as an announcement to the people outside that the performance is soon to begin. We see the place for the orchestra also, and the openings for ingress. Between the stage and the yard, where spectators had to stand exposed to every kind of weather, there are no dividing palings.

From the notes copied by Arend van Buchell from the MS. of Johannes de

Witt, the original of which is lost, we learn that the Swan Theatre was built of flintstone ("of which there is an immense mass in Britain") with wooden columns, "whose marble colour might deceive even the most expert." The prominent position of the Swan Theatre, as well as its size and splendid arrangements, become evident for the first time from this description. As to the chronology, Dr. Gädertz aptly quotes a passage from the poetical account of the travels of Prince Ludwig of Anhalt-Köthen, who was in London in 1596, and who later on became known as a member of a society for the restoration of the purity of the German language. That passage agrees closely with de Witt's description of the four chief playhouses, as well as of the bear gardens and the places for bull and dog-fights; and this—not to mention stronger arguments tending the same way—seems to fix 1596 as the likeliest date for de Witt's sojourn in London.

Arend van Buchell, who has preserved the important extracts, was a friend of Johannes de Witt—"born in the same year (1565) and brought up with us," as de Witt himself writes. The latter was canon of St. Mary's Church in Utrecht; but, having obtained a dispensation from his duties, mainly spent his time in travel, collecting materials for the history of art and literature. Among the MSS. composed during his journeys was a catalogue of painters and paintings, entitled *Calum Pictorium*. It was a work similar to the *Schilderboek* of Karel van Mander (1604), but, as de Witt says, far more comprehensive, though he does full justice to the researches of his predecessor. This catalogue was delayed in publication. De Witt then went to Italy, which he had longed to see for many years, and there again industriously made studies to complete the work. He was on the point of returning to Utrecht, when he died suddenly in 1622.

A mine of knowledge was thus irretrievably lost, so far as our present information goes; for the whereabouts of de Witt's MSS. is no longer known.

"Did he live at Rome or at Venice?" Dr. Gädertz asks. "Did the things he left remain at either of these places? Who was with him at the last moment? Who took care of his burial? Who was his heir? Have his MSS. gone astray into an Italian public or private library? Are there any documents referring to him in the chancery of the Embassy of the Netherlands? In

Italy his last intercourse was with Paulus Brillius, Antonius Tempesta, Gerhard Hont-horst, and Cornelis Poelenburg. Did any of



A MIRACLE-PLAY AT COVENTRY IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

these painters perhaps come into possession of his property? Or was it conveyed to Utrecht by the two last-mentioned, who were de Witt's compatriots? Might not Arend van Buchell, knowing, as he did, of the labours of his friend and relation who died single and childless, have brought forward any claims? With united forces all explorers of art must now follow these traces and make their researches in Holland and Italy."

If the *Cælum Pictorium* is exhumed from the dust in which it must have lain for nearly three hundred years, the other MSS. of Johannes de Witt will in all likelihood be found in it. In that case it will be the merit of Dr. Gädertz, whose name is already favourably known by a history of the "Drama of Lower Germany" from the oldest times, to have pointed out the tracks leading to the recovery.

The opinion of Dr. Gädertz is that the drawing was probably made by no other than Luis Cranach, who at that time lived at Wittenberg, and who drew many woodcuts and ornamental headpieces for Rhau, whose portrait he also painted. The Pyramus and Thisbe story was a favourite subject with German artists of the time, such as Hans Holbein and Cranach. Dr. Gädertz further concludes that the woodcut, being so well executed and having no reference whatever to the political and religious theme of the pamphlet, which is mainly an exhortation

addressed to all Christians to fight against the Turks, must originally have adorned the title-page of a German story of Pyramus and Thisbe, which possibly was the source of Shakespeare's interlude in "A Midsummer Night's Dream." Among the books published by Richard Tottel in Shakespeare's time, there are two ("A Dialogue of Comfort against Tribulation, made by Syr Thomas More," and the "The History of Quintus Curcius") which both have the same woodcut on their title-pages as Sauromann's pamphlet. There are only a few slight deviations in detail; but the German dress is preserved in the figures. The hypothesis of Dr. Gädertz is that the London publisher used the Wittenberg original for a new block, and that he first brought out the woodcut with a translation of a German work on Pyramus and Thisbe, afterwards making use of it for two other prints. Bold as the surmise may appear, Dr. Gädertz adduces arguments which cannot be lightly set aside. At all events, we have here some valuable suggestions which may lead to further discoveries.

In the early days of theatricals, when ever theatres are named, the Bankside pre-



The Stage of the Red Bull Theatre, Clerkenwell.

dominates over all other localities. The Bank-side, and Holywell Lane, Shoreditch, were the headquarters of the players, largely

pleasure gardens, orchards, and open but cultivated spots, the land on the Surrey side belonging to the Crown, and on various parts of it stood the Globe Theatre, the Bear Garden, and other places of public show: here were also the Pike Gardens, sometimes called the Queen's Pike Gardens, with ponds for the preservation of fresh-water fish, which were said to be kept for the supply of the Royal table, under the inspection of an officer called the King's Purveyor of Pyke, who had here a house for his residence.

called private houses, viz., a house in Blackfriars, the Cockpit or Phoenix in Drury Lane, the theatre in Whitefriars, and some public theatres, the Globe, the Swan, the Rose, and the Hope on the Bankside; the Red Bull in the upper end of St. John's street, and the Fortune in White Cross-street. In addition to these there were performances in the Inn Courts, such as the Belle Sauvage in Ludgate Hill, the Swan in Fetter Lane, the Bull and others in Holborn. It does not appear at what time the Globe Theatre was originally built,



The Tabard, the most celebrated of the Southwark Pilgrim inns, and from which Chaucer's company of pilgrims, subject of his tales, set out.

At the upper part of the Bank-side was the Globe Theatre. As we have seen, at this time theatrical amusements were in great estimation. There were in the latter part of Queen Elizabeth's reign no less than ten places for the representation of dramatic pieces, or, as they were then called, mysteries and histories, the drama prior to Shakespeare's advent consisting of a representation of particular events in a kind of narrative succession; that sort of composition became afterwards interwoven into a plot, more calculated to keep the attention engaged by expectation. Of these places some were

though there is little doubt that of four mentioned to be on the Bank-side, the Globe was the only one used as a theatre for dramatic entertainments; the others, under the names of the Swan, the Rose, and the Hope, being chiefly employed in an inferior species of amusement, most probably bear and bull baiting. The Bank-side, at this period, seems to have been frequented by libertines of the lowest cast. The account of the Globe Theatre is from Malone's Supplemental Observations to Stevens' Shakespeare:—

"The Globe Theatre (he informs us) was situated on the southern side of the river

Thames; was a hexagonal building, partly open to the weather, partly covered with reeds. It was a public theatre, and of considerable size; and there they always acted by daylight. On the roof of the Globe, and the other public theatres, a pole was erected, to which a flag was affixed. These flags were probably displayed only during the hours of exhibition; and it should seem from a passage in one of the old comedies, that they were taken down during Lent, in which season no plays were represented.

"The Globe, though hexagonal at the outside, was probably a rotunda within, and perhaps had its name from its circular form. It might, however, have been denominated only from its sign; which was a figure of Hercules supporting the globe. This theatre

"One of these theatres was a winter, and the other a summer house. As the Globe was partly exposed to the weather, and they acted there usually by daylight, it was probably the summer. The exhibitions here seem to have been more frequent than at Blackfriars, at least till the year 1604 or 1605, when the Bank-side appears to have become less frequented than it formerly had been."

Many of the most favourite dramatic pieces were performed in the yards of the carriers' inns by travelling performers (hence the term "strolling players"), in which, in the beginning of Queen Elizabeth's reign, the comedians, who then first united themselves in companies, erected a stage. This is abundantly proved by an author writing



From an old print.

Sho
Swan and Lamb
about
1650

was burnt down in 1613; but it was rebuilt in the following year, and decorated with more ornament than had been originally bestowed upon it.

"The exhibitions at the Globe seem to have been calculated chiefly for the lower class of people; those at Blackfriars, for a more select audience.

"The superior discernment of the Blackfriars audience may be likewise collected from a passage in the preface prefixed by Hemings and Condell to the first folio edition of our author's works: 'and though you be a magistrate of wit, and sit on the stage at Blackfriars or the Cockpit, to arrange plays dailie, know these plays have had their tryal already, and stood out all appeals.'

at the time, Fleckno, in his "Short Discourse of the English Stage," published in 1664, who says some remains of these ancient theatres were at that day to be seen in the inn-yards of the Cross-keys in Gracechurch Street, and the Bull in Bishopsgate Street. In the seventeen playhouses erected between the years 1570 and 1629, the continuator of Stow's Chronicle reckons "five innes or common osteryes turned into playhouses."

The form of these temporary playhouses seems to be preserved in our modern theatres. The galleries are in both ranged over each other on three sides of the building. The small rooms under the lowest of these galleries, answer to our present boxes; and there were other features of conformity.

The old inn's yard bears a sufficient resemblance to the theatre pit as at present in use. We may suppose the stage to have been raised in this area, on the fourth side, with its back to the gateway of the inn, at which the money for admission was taken. Thus, in fine weather, a play-house, not incommodious, might have been formed.

Hence, in the middle of the Globe, and the

"Can this cockpit hold
The vasty fields of France—or may we cram,
Within this wooden O, the very casques
That did affright the air at Agincourt?"

In the writer's opinion there has been general error in assuming Shakespeare as belonging to the profession of an actor. He may occasionally have taken a part in order to throw vigour into the piece, and let



other public theatres, in the time of Shakespeare, there was an open yard or area, where the common people stood to see the exhibition; hence they were called by Ben Jonson, "the understanding gentlemen of the ground."

Shakespeare himself uses cock-pit to express a small confined situation, without any particular reference:

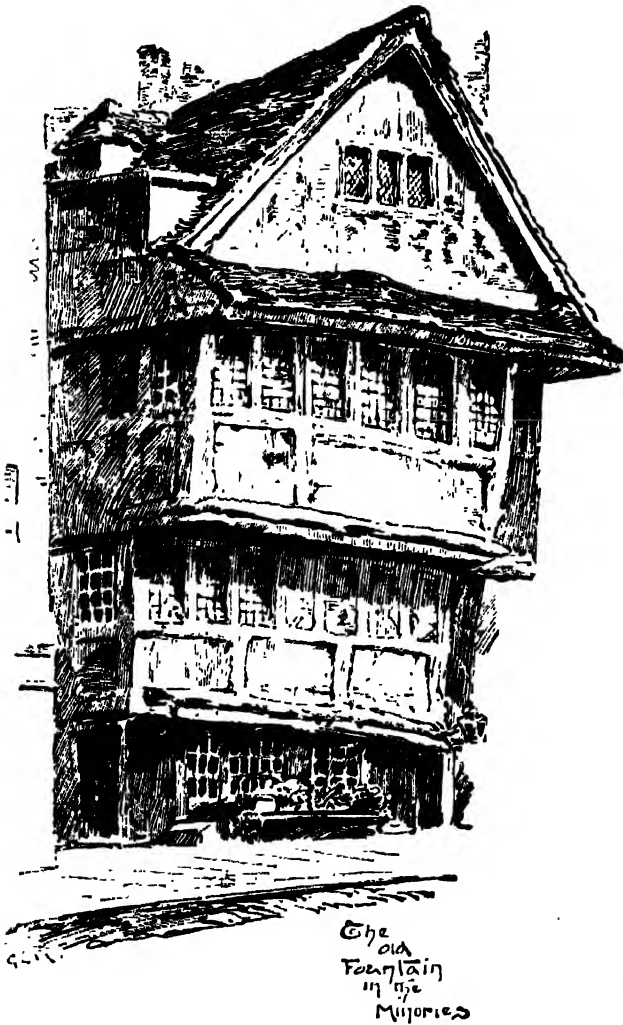
the players see what his idea was of their respective duties. He was both Author and Instructor, a living representative of Hamlet's unrivalled teacher, and who shall doubt his manner and appearance being on a par with the words of which he sought to make them each interpreters? No doubt he was as mighty in the one capacity as in the other,

and the very fact of his being only occasionally mentioned as an actor—and be it remembered there exists no account of how he represented any character or scene—is conclusive proof that when he appeared on the stage it was to impart life to the play by instructing each performer in a proper reading of his part, and which would be done much more effectively through imper-

ing in a few words to the meanest as to the highest performer a perfect code, must in himself have been the greatest of all realizers of the modes in which his own words should be interpreted. Let no more time be wasted in miserably discussing whether he was great or small in this or that. It is wonderful how he found time for any stage impersonation.

Shakespeare had little more than passed the period termed "of age" when he entered on London life. He had long been acquainted with the Burbages, father and son, the elder, James, having been originally a joiner, had become an actor, the builder of the theatre, and identified with dramatic concerns of various kinds. He was a successful business man, and died "well off" in 1597, leaving the young man Richard, another son, and a daughter, joint proprietors of the so-called "Theatre" and also of the Blackfriars theatre, both of which the father had built. Here was a large fortune to manage and a most important business to conduct. Both the young men were steady and in every way well conducted. Holywell Lane, Shoreditch, where resided most of the actors, was Burbage's home; but Shakespeare seems from his first arrival to have settled in Southwark. When his brother joined him is not correctly known, but it occurred close upon William's advent, and they both lived together as truly affectionate brothers. From first to last there was no break in the business and professional connection of Burbage and Shakespeare, which lasted until Shakespeare's final relinquishment of London for his loved home at Stratford. They were uniformly bound up in the same ventures, and all admit that as an actor of the time Burbage had no rival. He

was no mean artist of the brush, evidenced by several portraits of his execution in the Dulwich Gallery. There is tradition that Shakespeare and Burbage lived together on the former first reaching London; it is possible, but it ceased after Edmond's arrival. Contemporary criticism never placed a rival near Burbage's throne. Fortunate as he was in having Shakespeare beside him,



sonating a character which brought him into such contact with them as enabled a combination of instruction with all-pervading example. Hamlet's instructions to the players must ever remain the masterpiece of dramatic instruction, conveying more reality than all that before or since has been uttered or written, or ever likely to be hereafter. The man who could lay down rules convey-

Shakespeare was not less to be envied in having an actor and business associate of admitted great genius to embody and impersonate his wondrous creations. When he died tragic parts were said to have died with him; poets were to cease to write. Sir R. Baker says that Burbage and Alleyn "were two such actors, that no age must ever look to see the like." At his death he bequeathed freehold property valued in those times at twelve hundred a year, besides many other possessions.

Burbage, however, was not the only great actor of his day, neither was money reward only extended to the Globe and Blackfriars. The Fortune Theatre, built in 1599, proved truly a fortune to its chief owner and great actor, Alleyn, the founder of our present grand institution, Dulwich College. Here the Lord Admiral's servants performed. From the indentures between Alleyn and Hemlowe, his co-partner, on the one side, and the builder, Steel, on the other, we learn that the house had three tiers, consisting of boxes, rooms, and galleries, that there were "two-penny rooms," and "gentlemen's"; that the width of the stage was forty-three feet, and the depth thirty-nine and a half, including the tiring house at the back. The balcony was so arranged that when not in use by the players it might be availed of by the audience. We thus see how the old stage directions were fulfilled, as "enter Romeo and Juliet at the window." In the balcony also would sit the Court in "Hamlet," during the performance of the play, and in similar cases of a play within a play, other primitive methods had to be resorted to. The names of the theatres were borrowed from their respective signs exhibited outside. As regards Alleyn's theatre, Heywood speaks of—

"The picture of Dame Fortune,
Before the Fortune playhouse."

Many of the actors were poets also, like their great exemplar, Shakespeare, and were generally worthy of the dramas they represented. The chief men of note were Burbage, Hemings, and Condell, Shakespeare's friends and literary executors, who, "without ambition, either of self-profit or fame—only to keep the memory of so worthy a fellow alive as was our Shakespeare," published the first edition of his collected works; Taylor, Kemp, Sly, Lowin, Field, and other actors of the rank participated in the profits of the company to which they belonged as whole sharers or half-sharers,

and not, as is too commonly the case in our day, permitting the stars to swallow up the bulk of the proceeds, the other performers being hired at salaries, or were apprenticed to particular members of the company. The emoluments of the sharers were large, as in addition they were frequently called upon to play before the Court, for which the usual payment was ten pounds, and at the mansions of the nobility, at marriages and christenings. The price of admission varied at the different theatres. Ben Jonson has told us



in an amusing passage what they were in 1614, when his "Bartholomew Fair" was acted at the Hope. In the induction he says, "It shall be lawful for any man to judge his sixpennyworth, his twelvcpennyworth, so to his eighteenpence, two shillings, half a crown, to the value of his place, provided always his place get not above his wit." But Dekker speaks of your swindling and gallery commoner buying his sport for a penny, and other writers also of the "penny bench theatres," referring to those of a lower grade.

Such were the theatres of London in which Shakespeare occasionally performed, in order to give vigour to his productions.



THOMAS DEKKER.



THOMAS MIDDLETON.



PHILIP HERBERT,
Earl of Montgomery.



THOMAS HEYWOOD.



FRANCIS BEAUMONT.



EDWARD ALLEYN.



WILLIAM DRUMMOND.



WILLIAM ALEXANDER, Earl of Stirling.



NATHANIEL FIELD.



PHILIP MASSINGER.



EARL OF PEMBROKE.



BEN JONSON.



THOMAS GREENE.



GEORGE CHAPMAN.



DRAYTON.



QUEEN ELIZABETH.



LORD CHAMBERLAIN
HUNSDON.



RICHARD BURBAGE



JOHN FLETCHER.



JOHN TAYLOR.



JOHN LOWIN.



DONNE.



SAMUEL DANIEL.

AUTHORS AND ACTORS, CONTEMPORARIES OF SHAKESPEARE.

FACSIMILES OF THE ENTRIES OF BAPTISMS OF SHAKESPEARE'S CHILDREN IN THE PARISH REGISTER.

May 26 Susanna daughter to William Shakespeare

February 2 Hamnet & Judith, sons & daughter to William Shakespeare

FACSIMILES OF ENTRY OF HIS DAUGHTER SUSANNA'S MARRIAGE WITH DR. HALL.

July 5.

John Hall gentleman & Susanna Shakespeare

THE ENTRY OF JUDITH'S MARRIAGE WITH THOMAS QUINEY.

February 20

To Antony for Judith Shakespeare

FACSIMILE OF BURIAL ENTRY OF THE POET'S ONLY SON, HAMNET, WHO DIED AUGUST 11TH, 1596.

August 11 Hamnet filius William Shakespeare

ENTRY OF BURIAL OF THE POET'S FATHER, WHO DIED SEPTEMBER 8TH, 1601.

Septemb. 8 m^r Iohn Shakespeare

OF THE POET'S WIFE, WHO DIED AUGUST 8TH, 1623

August 8 m^{rs} Shakespeare

OF HIS DAUGHTER SUSANNAH, WIDOW OF DR. HALL, WHO DIED JULY 16TH, 1649.

July 16 m^{rs} Susanna Hall widow

OF HIS DAUGHTER JUDITH, WIFE OF THOMAS QUINEY.

Hebri 9 Judith brot home Quiney, son

THE PASSING AWAY OF THE MIGHTY SPIRIT IS THUS ENTERED FOR APRIL 25TH, 1616:—

April 25 will Shakespeare gent



Richmond
Bridge

SHAKESPEARE AND RICHMOND.



BEAUTIFUL RICHMOND!—the many - centuried home of Kings as of several of our Sovereign Queens, remains romantic and lovely as of yore; though shorn of its royal turretted Palace, it can now boast of a more highly cultivated country, with public parks and gar-

dens of extent and kind known to no other spot in the world, where plants and flowers of every region are cared for and bloom in highest perfection by skilled hands, all open to the poorest and humblest as to the richest of

the realm. Who can over-estimate the pleasures here available to all and maintained in greatest perfectitude by the wise aid and bounteous revenues of the nation? On either side of its "Royal Towered Thames," and extending for many miles of distance, are residences surpassing all other neighbourhoods of the great city, unrivalled of the world, and which, in our day, have more than ever been its most attractive adjunct. Though the Sovereign herself be not within its local limit, yet the battlements of her more than regal home are within sight of its heights, and members of the Royal house rejoice to make their homes close within its area, and are frequently seen in the town itself enjoying the delightful drives abounding in every direction around it, mingling graciously to the manner born among the inhabitants with whom it is their pleasure to dwell.

"The Palace of Nonsuch, a private purchase of Queen Elizabeth, and close to Richmond," said Hentzner, in 1598, "is encompassed with parks, gardens, groves orna-

mented with trellis work, cabinets of verdure (summer houses and seats cut in yews), and walls so embowered with trees, that it seems to be a place pitched upon by pleasure herself to dwell in along with health. In the pleasure and artificial gardens are many columns and pyramids of marble, fountains that spout water, one round, another like a pyramid, upon which are perched small birds that stream water out of their bills. In the grove of Diana is a very agreeable fountain, with Actæon turned into a stag, as he was sprinkled by the goddess and the nymphs, with inscriptions. Here is, besides, another pyramid of marble, full of concealed pipes, which spurt upon all who come within their reach." The winding walks, the turf

Dutch gardens, as the appendages of a quaint "Nonsuch," are beautiful. There is a wild beauty of nature, and there is a beauty in nature linked to art; one looks for a very different kind of beauty in fields from what one does in a garden. The one delights by a certain rude freedom and untamed magnificence; the other by smoothness and elegance—by velvet lawns, bowery arbours, winding paths, fair branching shrubs, fountains, and juxtaposition of many rare flowers. It is an inestimable advantage that the olden tastes of the nation differed so much from the present; without this, what a loss of variety would be suffered! If the present taste was that of all past ages, what could there have been in the gardens



THE PALACE: RIVER FRONT.

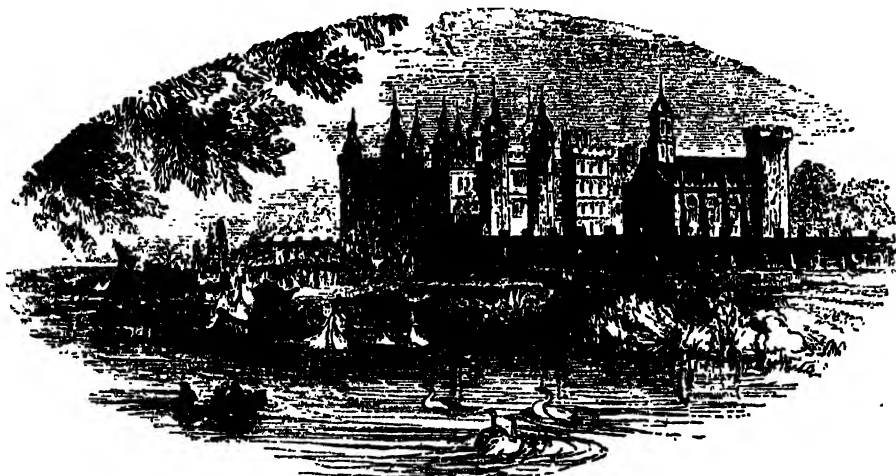
lawns, the bowery shrubberies, the green slopes to the margin of waters, the retention of rocks and thickets where they naturally stood—all these beautiful Elysian scenes were perfectly illustrated at "Nonsuch." It possessed a then unrivalled collection of Italian paintings and other works of art. Shakespeare, it is traditioned, resorted thither to study more than Italian art, and we know made use of the opportunities. Nature, as initiated in her rudest scenes rather than as she would modify herself around man's created homes, was realized by him at "Nonsuch." We should no more think of now laying out grounds after the manner of this favoured acquisition of Elizabeth than of wearing her ruffs or bag wigs, and basket-hilted swords; and yet the old French and

of our past kings, nobles, and historical characters to mark them as strongly and emphatically as they are in our delights? "Nonsuch" is traditioned as a place frequently resorted to by Shakespeare.

Few men had such forcible power of expressing himself on the beauties of old English gardens and kindred subjects as Lord Beaconsfield; these had a special charm for him, largely the result of a deep sympathy with what most interested his wife. Never was there a happier couple. The course of years, served only to weld more firmly their chain of married life. In early days, before his influence and power in the country was felt, the writer accompanied them in a walk through Holland Gardens, and was delighted with his manner of playing up, as it were, to

his wife's taste, favouring the formality of the old English style; forcible words were ever at hand to supply her needs of expression. Memory recalls his contentions that old blue and white oriental china was a creation for special decoration of rooms, possessed of aspects commanding even the most distant views of old English gardens. Disraeli, as one delights to speak of him, was well read in Shakespeare, but had a righteous horror of the commentators and emendators; as he would smilingly express it, "Shakespeare is *wise enough for me*." It is interesting to know that his wife shared in a degree almost without precedent the abiding love of her husband, increasing as the end of life neared.

More than a hundred years ago, he thus records:—"Towards evening we arrived at Richmond. This town, though hardly out of sight of London, is more countrified, pleasanter, and more cheerful than London, and the houses are not so much blackened by smoke. The people appeared to me more sociable, and more hospitable. On a large green area in the middle of the town, a number of boys and young men were enjoying themselves playing at trap-ball. In the streets there reigned here, compared to London, a pleasing rural tranquility, and I breathed a purer and fresher air. I went out of the town over a bridge across the Thames, and from it you enter immediately



THE PALACE, *temp.* QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Lady Beaconsfield was in the habit of having Shakespeare read to her by her husband. Without any assumed power of an elocutionist, his impressiveness was a feature corresponding with his calm voice, sonorous, yet of dulcet tone. Truly, the lives of the Beaconsfields would have earned them the Dunmow sitch if ever righteously awarded. With such examples of perfect happiness in disparity of years, silence is commanded of those who would draw other conclusions in the case of Shakespeare and Sweet Anne. The difference of years was about the same.

A German traveller named Moritz, who made a pedestrian tour all through England more than a century ago, and whose experiences are so well appreciated as to cause their reprint in our time, gives rapturous expression of his appreciation of Richmond, and which is as applicable now as then.

into a most charming valley, that winds all along the banks of the Thames. It was evening. The sun was just shedding her last parting rays on the valley; but such an evening, and such a valley! Oh, it is impossible I should ever forget them. The terrace at Richmond does assuredly afford one of the finest prospects in the world. Whatever is charming in nature, or pleasing in art, it is to be seen here. Nothing I had ever seen, or ever can see elsewhere, is to be compared to it. My feelings during the few short enraptured minutes that I stood there, it is impossible for any pen to describe.

"One of my first sensations was chagrin and sorrow for the days I had wasted in London, and I vented a thousand bitter reproaches that I had not quitted London to come here and pass my time in paradise.

"Yes, whatever be your ideas of paradise, and how luxuriantly soever it may be depicted to your imagination, I venture to foretell that here you will be sure to find all those ideas realised. In every point of view Richmond is assuredly one of the finest situations in the world. Here it was that Thomson and Pope gleaned from nature all those beautiful passages with which their inimitable writings abound. Everything breathed a soft and pleasing calm, which warmed my heart and filled it with some of the most pleasing sensations of which our nature is susceptible. Beneath, I trod on that fresh, even, and soft verdure which is to be seen only in England. On one side of me lay a wood than which nature cannot produce a

heavenly things. Happy, thrice happy am I that I am no longer in yon city, but here in Elysium, in Richmond.

"Oh, ye coppy hills, ye green meadows, and ye rich streams in this blessed country, how have ye enchanted me! In every future moment of my life, the recollection of this scene, and the feelings it inspired, shall cheer my labours and invigorate my efforts. Of the evening passed at Richmond, I speak feebly when I content myself with saying only, it was one of the pleasantest I ever spent in my life. Besides the pure air on the top of Richmond Hill, the prospect exceeds everything else of the kind in the world. I never saw a palace which, if I were the owner of it, I would not give for



THE RIVER SIDE, FERRY, HILL AND PALACE, A.D. 1600.

finer, and on the other the Thames, with its shelvy banks and charming lawns rising like an amphitheatre, along which here and there one may espy a picturesque house, aspiring in majestic simplicity to pierce the dark foliage of the surrounding trees, thus studding like stars in the galaxy, the rich expanse of this charming vale.

"Sweet Richmond! never, no, never, shall I forget that lovely evening, when from thy fairy hills thou didst so hospitably smile on me, a poor lonely, insignificant stranger! As I traversed to and fro thy meads, thy little swelling hills and flowery dells, and above all, that queen of all rivers, thy own majestic Thames, I forgot all sublunary cares and thought only of heaven and

any of the houses on Richmond Terrace. The descent of the hill to the Thames is covered with verdure, the Thames at the foot of it forms nearly a semicircle, in which it seems to embrace woody plains, with meadows and country seats in its bosom. On one side you see the town and its magnificent bridge, and on the other a dark wood.

"At a distance you could perceive, peeping out among the meadows and woods, sundry small villages, so that notwithstanding the dulness of the weather this prospect even now was one of the finest I had ever seen."

Richmond Church, so far as the Tower and Chancel are concerned, dates back prior to Shakespeare, and is therefore a true

trict, he knew Shakespeare as boy and man as he did Walter Roche and Simon Hunt, the guides, "preceptors of the thousand-souled." We may safely track Shakespeare through these channels to Richmond. Here he was and here he would oftentimes be.

The chancel and tower of old Richmond church are the only remains of the temple in which he worshipped, on frequent visits to Richmond. The chancel is the better part, and should be maintained in its present original state. There are rumours of chancel enlargement: we will hope that nothing will be done to take from us Shakespeare's chancel. No Ophir or gold of a Solomon's temple can be a substitute for it; no money expenditure can render the main body of Richmond Parish Church beauteous, but its chancel is sacred to the whole world. The main body of

which singular custom continued to be occasionally resorted to down to the commencement and middle of the seventeenth century, in some instances at the request or wish of the survivors, and more frequently having been ordered by the testamentary decree of the deceased.

The meddling with Shakespeare's chancel raises a difficulty bearing on Elizabeth Ratcliff, Her Majesty's maid of honour, and which would prove quite as troublesome as any dealing with the Bardolph army, who in such force are gathered around its venerable walls, and who, on any exhumation, it will be difficult to save from general mixing up. Shall the digestive organs of the Queen's faithful maiden, so solemnly and almost grudgingly entrusted to St. Mary's keeping, be smuggled away at night time



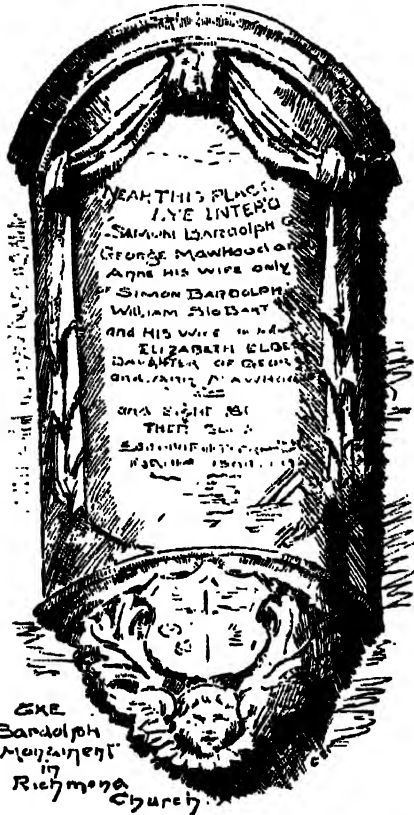
WINDSOR CASTLE AS IN QUEEN ELIZABETH'S TIME.

Richmond Parish Church, as of the sister parish churches of Isleworth and Twickenham, are as unecclesiastical as they well can be. No enlargements can be made to change their character. A new chancel to Richmond Old Church would serve only to bring into enhanced prominence the unsightliness of the existent main building. Build where needed a new church, but let no ruthless hands molest the chancel sacred to Shakespeare.

There is an entry in 1599 of the death of one of the maids of honour, Elizabeth Ratcliff, with the information that "her bowells are buried in the Chancell at Richmond." This was but following a not infrequent practice in the time of our Norman monarchs, for the heart and bowels of the deceased king to be interred many miles distant from the spot where the body rested,

and laid in a dark bye-corner of the graveyard, already more than too thickly sown with the dead of centuries? The exhumation will include the whole Bardolph race of centuries. This indignity would be intolerable. It will need a strong-minded son of the trowel to unbuild and ransack these ancient vaults in pursuit of their presumed precious contents. Visions will be conjured of the maiden Queen herself hovering in the chancel to confront the disturbers of her favourite maid of honour, and do battle as Her Majesty in her day of prime and physical capability was so equal to. When in life, hers was a strong hand, so much so, that almost at the moment of yielding to the grim tyrant Death, she reminded her trusty counsellor Burleigh that had not the last moments of human strength been upon her, he would not have dared to address her as he did. Her guttural words,

"Little man! Little man!" will pass down through history as her latest struggle of dignity and forbearance. She of the Armada defeat may be found verifying her Mortlake astrologer's prediction to re-appear on any great emergency in Richmond. May not this desecration prove an event calculated to bring her back in spirit to contend with Richmond grave-meddlers? We yield to none in respect for the reverend Canon whose ministry of forty years has been productive of so great good. No more devoted



minister of any church than Vicar Procter, one whose whole life and heart and strength have been unsparingly given to the cause of God and the saving of souls. We would, however, counsel that he wage not war with the spirit of Elizabeth, the more especially as the chancel enlargement would afford little or no increase in pew or other accommodation. The Canon of St. Mary would be doughty in any encounter, but could he contend against the irate spirit of a sovereign who, whilst in the flesh, never yielded, to say nothing of Shakespeare, Bardolph, and

numerous generations of his race occupying the chancel in full adoption of their chief's valedictory record?

Shakespeare's friendships in "old Richmond," however he may have kept aloof from palace court officials, were by no means restricted to the clerical element, and although peculiar occurrences seem apparently to have confined his circle, yet it was not so in reality. The Catholics assure us "he was resident in Richmond with a family of Bardolphins, who lived in a narrow neck leading to the green"; here the chain snaps as usual, and we are left to feel that we have tracked up the inimitable one. Who will doubt it? There they lie, a whole troupe of men close to the chancel inside the old church, so that if any digging or delving occur for enlargement sake, the bones of the Bardolph race, if not in dust, must be hacked for foundation purposes. Beware of Shakespeare's anathemas extending to his friend! The Bardolphins were a prolific race, especially in the male line. A marble scroll on the wall close to the seat wont to be occupied by the writer, records that one "Simon Bardolph lies near this place," and his son and son's wife, besides eight sons and any number of grandchildren, which full quiver are all immolated at our feet. Personally, all must have kindest remembrances of Bardolph, but he may as well have carried the family kittens into the churchyard as to have brought the entire race under one's nose in the parochial temple. It is close upon two centuries since the last of the troupe was brought to the Bardolph mortuary.

Richmond parish registers are of very marked interest, commencing in 1583. Oh, that they had but recorded somewhat of the friends with whom Shakespeare made his home on occasion of his visits! The exquisitely beautiful handwriting of these Richmond old registers is evidence that handwriting generally was practised in Shakespeare's time, and was anything but the rarity Shakespeare's inventive biographers have asserted. The word "chrysom" is more than once used, and is understood to refer to children whose deaths have occurred after they had been christened, but before the mother has been churched. But in the course of time the term "chrysom" began to be used by the clergy, as signifying children who died before the rites of baptism had been administered. This application of the word is incorrect, although so used in many old parish

registers; it may be and is generally so received, but it is not the original interpretation. Bishop Taylor used the word in his "Holy Living": "Undiscerned as are the phantasms that make a *chrisome* child to smile."

It is somewhat remarkable, and certainly most interesting confirmation of the tradition as to Shakespeare having been intimate with the parish priest of Richmond, that he should have used this almost obsolete term in "Henry V." Mrs. Quickly, when informed of the death of Falstaff, exclaims, "Nay, sure, he's not in hell; he's in Arthur's bosom, if ever man went to Arthur's bosom. 'A made a finer end, and went away, an it had been any *chrisom* child."

furnishes an interesting statement of her daily routine of life within two years of accession. "First, in the morning, she spent some time at her devotions, then she betook herself to the despatch of her civil affairs, reading letters, ordering answers, considering what should be brought before the Council, and consulting with her Ministers. When she had thus wearied herself, she would walk in a shady garden or pleasant valley, without any other attendants than a few learned men. Then she took her coach and passed in the sight of her people to the neighbouring groves and fields, and sometimes would hunt or hawk; there was scarce a day but she employed some part of it in reading or study. She



THE MONASTERY IN RICHMOND GARDENS, ERECTED BY HENRY V.

It was in 1414 that Henry V., to expiate the crime by which his family had obtained the Crown—that is, by the dethronement and murder of Richard II.,—founded his "famous" religious house for forty monks of the Carthusian order, under the name of "The House of Jesus of Bethlehem at Sheen," by which name it was incorporated, and one John Wydington constituted the first prior. Shakespeare knew the reasons given for the institution of this convent, as, in his tragedy of "Henry V.," he makes the king, prior to the battle of Agincourt, utter the following:—

"Not to-day, O Lord."

The accession of Elizabeth was a great benefit to Richmond, the palace being her favourite home, notwithstanding it having previously served as her prison. Bohun

slept little, seldom drank wine, was sparing in her diet, and a religious observer of the fasts; she seldom dined alone, but more commonly had with her some of her friends; at supper she would divert herself with her friends, and if they made her no answer, she would put them upon pleasant mirth and pleasant discourse with great civility." How great the changes in Richmond and its neighbourhood since the times of these occurrences outside the home of Royalty on the Green! Little evidence is there of the existence of a palace such as occupied so extended a site and with so large frontage to the river. On the river's opposite shore stood the home of the philosopher Bacon, who had then neither attained greatness nor suffered degradation; his gardens were planted by himself in highest taste.



The poet Spenser, known to have been at Bacon's St. Margaret residence with Shakespeare.

How true it is that history repeats itself, even in matters seemingly beyond bounds! Thus, on Richmond Green, in front of the Palace, on the occasion of the marriage of the Prince and Princess Arthur and Catherine of Wales, the Blondin of our day was equalled, if not surpassed, by the acrobat of 1501. The wedding programme included the following feats as recorded at the time:—

"Upon the outside of the walls, directly under the windows of the Palace, were bars and void spaces for jousts, also there were raised and set up two high and great posts, these posts first set and driven into the ground; over the crosses was a great cable stretched steadfastly, and drawn with a wheel, and stayed upon both sides with divers cords, so that the sight of it was like unto the ridging of a house; upon this frame and cable ascended and went up, a Spaniard, the which shewed there many wonders and delicious points of tumbling and dancing, and other sleights. First, he went up into the frame, and a certain stay in his hand, to the number of forty feet, somewhat aslope, and, when he came to this height, left his stay, and went upon the cable, sometimes upon pattens, sometimes with tennis balls, sometimes with fetters of iron, leaping many leaps upon the said cable, both forwards and backwards, as he played sometimes with the teeth, most marvellously, and with the greatest sleight and cunning that any man

could possibly exercise or do; after these long beholding, with other goodly disports, the King's grace and noble company entered again through these pleasant gardens of his lodging in Richmond unto Evensong, and so on unto his supper."

Some families whose past histories should afford information bearing on Shakespeare's life, assert that he met Spenser and Sir Walter Raleigh on more than one occasion at Richmond, and that Bacon was in the habit of receiving them together at his St. Margaret's home.

Richmond Green has, in its time, been the scene of many splendid tilts and tournaments and gay and comely doings. These were the palmy days of the Palace and the Green; and, in later times, when these knightly contests had ceased to take place, it became the "pleasure" of the Palace. It was of much greater extent than now, occupying formerly a space of twenty acres.

Reference to Old Richmond is made in the Domesday Book:—

"This place of Richemond is neighburd also with 11 most devoute and vertuous housis of religion; the hous of the holy men and women uppon the von side of the ryvr called Syon s'ta, and the hous of the Monks of that hous called Sheene uppon the other side of the ryvr, in the which monastres and plac's of religion is every hour of the night and daye made to Almighty God solempne p'yours and petic'ons. Thus, in this noble



Sir Walter, who was frequently at Bacon's St. Margaret home with Shakespeare.

lodgyng, the Kyng's Magcstie, wt his company, this Sat'rday at nyght is entrid, aft'r his huntynge, and there wt moche myrthe and pleasure he reposithe all that seASON."

BACON A RESIDENT CLOSE TO RICHMOND.

It is somewhat remarkable that local chroniclers have failed to give prominence to the philosopher having been long resident close in the neighbourhood of Richmond Palace, yet here he quietly rusticated for some years, in full view of its turrets. How passing strange that such a man should have been selected in this our day to be foisted upon the world as Shakespeare. For some years he lived at St. Margaret's, Twickenham Park, overlooking the "Old Deer Park" and

Twickenham, which is separated from Richmond only by the picturesque bridge sketched at the head of this chapter, is a main connecting link with what is known of Shakespeare's visits to the neighbourhood; doubly interesting as clearly indicating his intimacy with Bacon, then living at his house only a short distance on the other side at St. Margaret's, in Twickenham Park, which was originally called Isleworth Park, and also the New Park of Richmond. Stow says that in 1263, during the reign of Henry III., "Simon de Mountfort, with the barons, pitched their



Palace front and gardens, where, we are told, "he passed many of his happiest years in the pursuit of science, his immediate presence being recognised by Queen Elizabeth," who "honoured him by her presence at an entertainment given in her honour, and that he availed himself of the occasion to present her with the well-known sonnet in praise of the Earl of Essex." The wily lawyer was, therefore, not indifferent to the surest means of ingratiating himself in his Sovereign's favour; how far he was successful history is the record.

tents in Isleworth or Thistleworth Parke." The site of the encampment is in the parish of Twickenham. In the park there stood from 1414 to 1431 the monastery of St. Saviour and St. Bridget of Syon, of the order of St. Augustine. It was the only religious house in England which followed the rules of St. Bridget, who instituted, in 1362, an order of monks and nuns. She was very careful in educating her children, hating idleness, and was most abstemious and charitable. In every one of her monasteries there were sixty nuns and twenty-five

monks, comprising thirteen priests, who represented the twelve apostles and St. Paul, four deacons, who represented the four doctors SS. Ambrose, Augustine, Gregory, and Jerome; and eight lay labourers, who occupied themselves with the affairs of the house. The whole number, eighty-five, had reference to the thirteen apostles. Henry V. founded the monastery, its charter dating March 3, 1414. The King built the house on a parcel of ground from which it is said he expelled the alien monks, and which was his own demesne in his manor of Isleworth in the parish of Twickenham. He endowed it until such time as it should be provided with other revenues. The establishment removed, in 1431, to Syon House, Isleworth, where it continued until

Edward Fitzgarret, in 1595, and in 1595 a further lease to Francis Bacon and John Hibberd. In 1592, Bacon seems suddenly to have taken refuge here with several friends, among whom was Field, author of a noted treatise, "Of the Church," consequent on a pestilence having broken out in Gray's Inn, and which dispersed the law men of the inn, a community of which Bacon was at the time a prominent member. It was just shortly before this plague fright Shakespeare and Bacon had been jointly engaged in getting up one or more of his plays at Gray's Inn, and it comes with the saying they should be frequently together in the eminently charming retreat just acquired by Bacon at the munificent hand of Elizabeth's favourite. Catholic traditions assert that Bacon wrote



the general suppression of monasteries by Henry VIII., in 1539. Its revenues then, according to Dugdale, amounted to £1,731 per annum.

Bacon's connection with Richmond dated early in his life, prior to his accession to title or honours, and, therefore, before his degradation. He came into possession of the St. Margaret's, Twickenham, estate through Queen Elizabeth's favourite Earl, Robert Essex, who is said to have presented the property to him, although there appears to have been a lease of it in the Bacon family as early as 1574, when it was demised to Edward Bacon, third son of Sir Nicholas, the Lord Keeper, by his first wife. In 1581, a lease was granted for thirty years to

the first portion of his great essays under the cedars of Twickenham Park; others go further, and say, our information is that Shakespeare and Bacon had a special fondness for the two old cedars, and spent much time, on occasions of Shakespeare visiting and resting with his friend at Twickenham, in reading and converse under the shade of these wide-spreading venerable trees.

At this time of these two mightiest of intellects communing together in the garden Bacon's consummate taste was perfecting, Shakespeare's dramas had evinced their vast superiority over all others in their ease and elaboration, as for the highest qualities of genius. Tears and laughter, the inseparable attendants of surpassing genius, burst forth.

The wit of Dogberry and the sailors in the "Tempest"; the wit of Kings in "Henry IV." and "Love's Labour Lost"; the wit of Falstaff, of which the Queen would discourse to Bacon, and of Hamlet; native wit, philosophic wit, the wit of the fat and of the thin man, wit in the half shimmerings of dawning reason, and of reason trenching upon madness; the wit of temperaments like Mercutio's; of topers like Sir Toby Belch; of mischief like Maria and Cleopatra; of confident villainy like Richard III., all came forth forth from him with inexhaustible fertility, for he had already proved himself "the thousand-souled";—none knew it so well as Bacon!

The St. Margaret's, Twickenham Park, property was very beautifully situate, and of considerable extent, and was a gift to him in this wise. Looked upon coldly by his relatives, the Cecils, he became a partisan of the Earl of Essex, who, having in vain endeavoured to obtain for Bacon the office of Solicitor-General, bestowed on his friend the estate in Twickenham Park. The value of the gift was great, and, as is recorded, "here under the spreading cedars, the hard-worked lawyer, dried up for many a week in the hot and dusty courts, used gladly to enjoy his leisure by the gentle Thames." Peaceful and lovely must have been the spot; it remains so even to the present day;



OLD INN, FORMERLY AT THE TOP OF RICHMOND HILL, NEAR THE PARK ENTRANCE.

The estate became his own property, afterwards became his in fee simple, in 1596, a year after residing on it. He always spoke of the great happiness enjoyed during the period of his residence here, as having afforded him joyous leisure and peaceful retirement. It was from St. Margaret's he wrote to his brother on October 16, 1594:—"One day draweth on another, and I am well pleased in my being here, for, methinks, solitariness collecteth the mind as shutting the eyes doth the sight." Clearly it must have been the scene of the happiest days spent by "the father of experimental philosophy," as Voltaire calls him. It is pleasant to think upon his country life, amid the beauteous surroundings of St. Margaret's, a patient student of nature, indulging in what he calls "the purest of human pleasures," the pursuit of gardening.

and, although now partially built over and the name changed, is one of the most charming adjuncts of Richmond. The ornamental grounds of Bacon's home within the present century became the property of the Earl of Ailsa, a considerable portion of which was sold to the Conservative Land Society, who apportioned it in building lots, reserving some fourteen acres as ornamental grounds, reserved for ever as private to the freeholders. The trees now growing in the reserve are said to have been planted by Bacon's hands. We know how enthusiastic he was and therefore readily believe the statement. The grounds reach to the Thames with a large frontage commanding the river and the Old Deer Park, a situation, apart from its associations with these great men, unrivalled on this beauteous part of the river. In its rear, in the reserve ornamental



Ancient Cedars in reserved grounds at St. Margaret's—formerly Bacon's gardens. Bacon is stated to have written his essays beneath their shade, and Shakespeare is traditioned as being his frequent companion here.

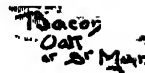
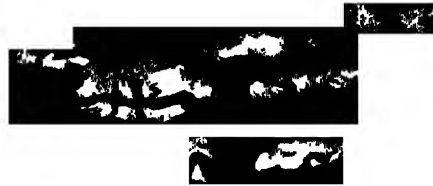
grounds, still exist two noble cedar trees, of age probably exceeding a thousand years, the very goodly growths under whose shade the philosopher found rest, and, as we are told, much happiness, when necessitous retirement from the world alone yielded him solace. These two noble trees, grand as they now are now in a mutilated condition with their lower limbs ruthlessly lopped, are noble specimens,

and in his day must have been in their prime—in fact, they were said to be then the finest cedars existing in England. A stream of ornamental water is within a few yards, also a veteran oak tree now fast merging on decrepitude, so much so that its branches tell only of former grandeur, and the scarcity of foliage in summer time, utters its tale of want of strength to resist the efforts of Eolus

for its final overthrow. Reviving spring acts tardily in stirring the sap for any early flow through its surviving limbs; death has laid its full hand on the upper branches, whose bareness even of bark tells of the centuries that have gone and past since its day of prime, rendering it now only a memorial of the past.

The fact of Shakespeare's sojourn in Bacon's beautiful home at St. Margaret's is as unquestionable as the removal of the great essayist from Gray's Inn Chambers through the plague scare. The mighty dramatist had before this time brought Bacon a worshipper at his feet. The classical *chef d'œuvres* of Elizabeth's Monarch, which had brought him so constantly to Richmond, had given a new direction to his powers. Every known region of the globe is laid under consideration. Greeks, Romans, Italians, French, Asiatics, Egyptians; ancient, modern, medieval times. Every rank, every profession, every age and condition of life passed before his eyes; once stored in his memory as in a treasure-house, to be summoned forth, not as pale, colourless spectres, but with their full complement of humanity, action, honest feelings, words, infinite shades of expressions and customs. The masterless passion is shadowed off by endless transitional modes of feeling. It is deposed from its seat by information and restored when the due time arrives. The brave are not always brave, the cruel not always unmerciful. Bacon was one of marvellous discernment, all these features were recognised and felt, every line of the great contemporary's products would then be as familiar as their wondrous power, and he would experience the highest gratification in welcoming him a visitor to his rural retreat. We give minutely correct sketches of these monarchs of the woods. It is to be hoped they will be protected by the St. Margaret freetholders, as standing monuments of an ever-interesting period of England's history—classic ground, indeed—for it was on this very spot Bacon wrote the earlier portion of his celebrated "Essays," which form his chief English work, and entitle him to the fame of holding a first rank among the grand old masters of English prose. When first published in 1597, the "Essays" were ten in number; others were added in 1612, and after his fall he spent much time in expanding and retouching them. These years were also marked by disappointment in love, though it may be opinioned that his

money necessities, consequent on debt through habitual extravagance, had somewhat to do with his love-suit with a rich young widow, named Lady Hatton, the object of his hopes. His great rival at the bar proved also a too formidable rival in the court of love. Attorney-General Coke stepped in and bore away the golden prize. However, the wound soon healed, for in 1606, a bridegroom of forty-five, richly clad in purple Genoa velvet, stood at the altar beside a fairy young bride in cloth of silver. The lady was the daughter of a Cheapside merchant, Alice Barnham, who on that day



Venerable Oak Tree in Bacon's Park.

changed her name to Lady Bacon. Sir Francis had been lately knighted by King James. Was ever a more chequered life? From the Solicitor-Generalship, bestowed in 1607, he stepped on, in 1613, to the rank of Attorney-General; in 1617, he received the Great Seal; and in the following year he reached the summit of his profession, being made Lord High Chancellor of England, with the title of Baron Verulam. Thus, at last, had Bacon beaten Coke, his rival in love, in law, and in ambition. The Lord Chancellor is, however, forgotten when the author of "Novum Organum" rises in our view. This wondrous work appeared in 1620,

Bacon's St. Margaret's home is described as "built of red brick, and containing several handsome apartments, with a noble staircase painted in a similar manner to that at Windsor Castle." Ironside identified the house through special circumstances of parish boundary marking. He says "the house stands in the two parishes of Twickenham and Isleworth. In the hall fronting to the south-west, is laid in the mosaic pavement of black and white marble a small iron cross, which divides the two parishes, and in their perambulation of the bounds, the parishioners of Twickenham direct a man to enter a window at the north-west end of the house, who proceeds to the centre, comes down stairs, and joins the company in the

Bacon was a man of extravagant habits, ever in debt, and therefore exposed to unworthy shifts, the which ultimately brought about his ruin. He was compelled to part with this his happy home, and that, too, at a price said to have been less than a third its value. Numerous persons owned it after him, one of the earlier being Lucy, wife of Edward, Earl of Bedford, the countess whose memory has been preserved to posterity by the verses of Donne, Dean of St. Paul's, to whom she was a liberal patroness. Donne was a poet whose early efforts are distinguished by unbounded licentiousness, while his later partook largely of the priestly element. Isaac Walton said of him that he began life as Saul, and ended it as Paul.

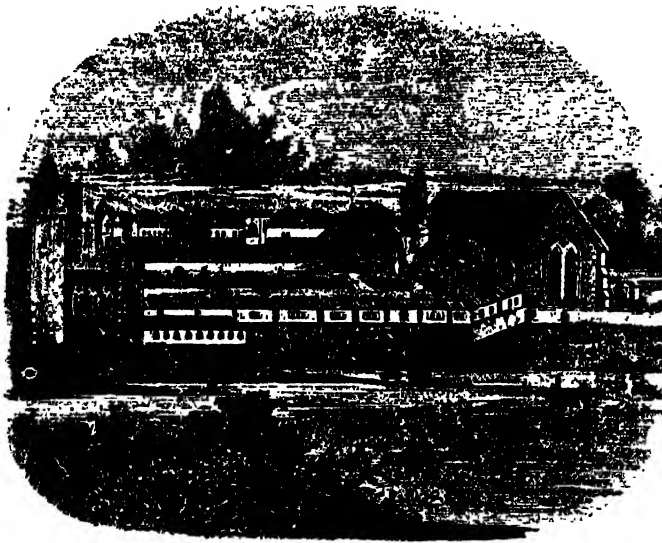
Ben Jonson also wrote for this celebrated woman more than one epigram. The property was held afterwards by the Countess of Home, then by Henry Murray, whose wife, Anne, alienated it to Lord John Berkeley, whose family resided here until 1685, when they sold the estate to the Earl of Cardigan, who, in 1698, alienated it to the Earl of Albemarle. In 1702, it was conveyed to Thomas Vernon, secretary to the Duke of Monmouth, and purchased of his heirs in 1743 by Algernon, Earl of Mountrath. The subsequent particulars, as detailed by Lysons, afford a very curious instance of what he terms "fortuitous accuracy of calculation."

The Earl's widow, Diana, daughter of the Earl of Bradford, by her will dated 1766, bequeathed it "to the Duchess of

Montrose during the joint lives of the Duke and Duchess of Newcastle; but if the Duchess of Newcastle should survive the Duke, the Duchess of Montrose to quit possession to her; and if she should survive her, to enjoy it again during her life. After the death of the Duchess of Montrose to remain to Lord Frederick Cavendish and his issue, with remainder to Sir William Abdy, Baronet, and his heirs in fee." It is remarkable that, except in the instance of Lord John not surviving Lord Frederick Cavendish, everything happened which the Countess thus singularly provided for. The Duchess of Montrose took possession, quitted to the Duchess of Newcastle, took possession again on her death, and

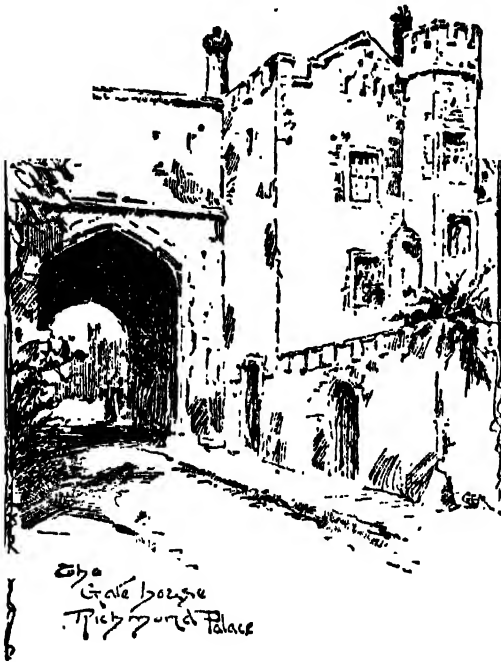
hall, where they sing the hundredth psalm. He then goes upstairs and proceeds to a south-west window, and comes down a ladder on the outside, joins the company again, and thus the ceremony ends."

The limit of Bacon's estate in St. Margaret's is readily traceable. Its river front included the present holding of the Budd family and the Kilmorely property, including the Royal Naval School and the sites of the residences of Arthur Crump and Thomas Young, also the land at the rear formerly owned by the Conservative Land Association, with the exception of the fourteen acres of reserve already built on. The estate of Henry Little of the Barons also was included.



The Friary, founded by Henry VII. in 1499, as a convent of 60 servant Friars.

was succeeded by Lord Frederick Cavendish, on whose death, in 1803, it devolved to Sir William Abdy in fee. Since then it has been in several hands, notably the Earl of Cassillis, afterwards Marquis of Ailsa, whose house was pulled down by Lord Kilmorey when he lived in the mansion now occupied by the Royal Naval School. Very near it lived Richard Brinsley Sheridan and his lovely first wife, in a charming house which had been tenanted by the Earl of Warwick.



In connection with Royal students of Shakespeare, it may here be named that the lamented Emperor Frederick of Germany, when informed of the discovery of De Witt's drawing of the interior of the Swan Theatre, in London, could give his mind to express hope that persevering search would result in further traces of the world's great bard being brought to light. Here we see this warrior Prince, a perfect type of the Latin poet's description, "thinking nothing foreign to him that was human" right gallant and skilful soldier as he was, to whom war was repugnant to his deepest feelings, living the ways and literature of peace. History fails in any other such instance of devotion to the duties of Sovereign, husband and father, as

this foremost citizen of an empire, proud of combining the highest results of modern culture with the traditionary simplicity and solidity of the antique German nationality. Here the nations beheld an illustrious monarch in the midst of bodily sufferings, proving himself in sympathy with the modern activity of his country in literature, scholarship, historical inquiry, science, and the fine arts. As was well said at his death, honesty of purpose, uprightness of conduct, valour, gentleness, constancy, as all other noble qualities of soul, were in his blameless life combined. In his summons from the world, no heavier bereavement could have been inflicted on the nations; it was, indeed, an historical catastrophe than which none other could more deeply stir the modern world. None but a Shakespeare could adequately express the depth to which every people was moved by the disappearance of the great, the heroic figure on whom Britain bestowed her most gifted daughter, a true woman, as the worthy wife of this chivalrous high-minded ruler, so noble and faithful a man.

The greatest of Bacon's works was fresh from the press when dark clouds gathered around its author. Coke, his bitter foe, and others whom the poison of envy had also tainted, raised a well-founded charge against the Chancellor for taking bribes. Undoubtedly, Bacon was guilty of the crime; his extravagance and love of show led to the temptation, against which he was unequal, although, it may be said, in extenuation of his fault, that other judges had received gifts under like circumstances. A case containing no less than two distinct charges of bribery and corruption presented by the House of Commons, and the Lords sat in judgment upon the highest lawyer of the realm. Humbled by the disgrace of his impeachment, he sent to the Lords a full confession of his guilt. "It is," said he, to some of his brother peers who came to ask him if this was his own voluntary act, "it is my act—my hand—my heart—O, my Lords, spare a broken reed!" The evening of his troubled life was spent among his books and experiments in retirement at Gorhambury, he having sold his St. Margaret's estate. Heavy debts still clung upon him. He, nothing daunted, and with extreme assurance, applied for the Provostship of Eton, but was naturally unsuccessful. The story of his death is at least curious. Driving in his carriage one snowy day, the thought

occurred that flesh might be preserved as well by snow as by salt. He immediately stopped, went into a cottage by the road, bought a fowl, and stuffed it full of snow. Feeling chilly and too unwell to go home, he went to the house of the Earl of Arundel, which was near. There he is said to have been put into a damp bed; fever ensued, and in a few days he was no more. His associations with the close vicinity of Richmond and the stately trees in the reserved grounds of St. Margaret's, hallowed of Shakespeare and Spenser, are worthy objects of admiration and delight, and must, so long as they endure, mark the home as of his ill-fated career.

It may seem strange to many that Shakespeare should be found clinging, as it were,

beyond the pale of its doctrinal conventionalism, and philosophers like Bacon poring over "the book of God's works" as a derogation to the "book of God's word." Sympathizing with Romanism and Protestantism so far as they were human, Shakespeare could not perhaps be wholly satisfied with either. There may, to his mind, have been something deeper than either, common to both. And whilst the creeds of neither are distinctly enunciated in his writings, whilst neither can claim him as an especial advocate, both recognise a sincere and profound religious element through his writings; not thrust forward to catch applause or gild a popular sentiment, but a pure vestal light, equally free from fanaticism on one side and from infidelity on the other.



Hatfield House, the ancient abode of the Salisburys, where Shakespeare visited, and where representation of one or more of his plays was made before Queen Elizabeth.

to the older faith, and yet holding chiefly to ministers who had accepted the new, this without cutting himself adrift from the old ties. But who shall measure the religious tendencies of one who had carved out for himself a wholly untrodden path as that designated by Coleridge "the thousand souled"? It is not given to the ordinary mortal to judge of the marvellously gifted. He was living in a sceptical age, when the freshness of faith and that confidence in the glories of Protestantism which had inspired the poetry of Spenser was fast dying out. Many had relapsed into Romanism, many had fallen into Atheism; the narrow creed of Puritanism could not accommodate itself to the larger sympathies and growing intelligence of the age. It viewed with consternation divines like Hooker securely trespassing

Shakespeare, according to tradition existing among old Roman Catholic families, frequently visited Richmond at other times than occasions of arranging theatrical performances before Queen Elizabeth. He was a frequent visitor at Isleworth vicarage, close by, where his friend, the Reverend Thomas Brown, held the living from 1605 until 1625. Especially he is tracked there as remaining for several weeks the year before his death, resting quietly with the son of a dear friend of the Shakespeare family, the son of the half-century Vicar of Stratford-on-Avon, the venerable Byfield, to whom the world stands indebted for the institution of its grand old Register of never-dying fame. Nicholas Byfield was instituted Vicar in 1615. He was the son of Richard Byfield, vicar of Stratford-on-Avon, and was

born there about 1579. In 1596 he became a butler or servitor of Exeter College, Oxon, during Lent Term, and remained there upwards of seven years, but left it without taking a degree. Being admitted, however, into holy orders, he left the University; and on his way to Ireland, where he purposed settling, and passing through Chester, he was, upon the delivery of a noted sermon at that place, invited to be pastor of St. Peter's Church, which he gladly accepted, and continued there for several years, much followed and admired, says Wood, "by the precise party, who esteemed his preaching profitable and his life pious." He was a strict observer of the Lord's day, on which subject he wrote, and involved himself in a controversy with Edward Brerewood, the mathematician, who, being a native of that city, was sometimes his auditor. From Chester he removed, in 1615, to the vicarage of Isleworth, where he died in 1622, leaving behind him an excellent character for learning, success in his ministry, and a pious and peaceable disposition. Dr. Gouge, of Blackfriars, who drew up an account of his death, and who wrote a preface to the posthumous works of Byfield, says that, on his body being opened, a stone was taken out of his bladder that exceeded thirty-three ounces in weight, measuring about the edge $15\frac{1}{2}$ inches, and was in length and breadth about 13 inches, and solid like a flint. Adiniram, one of Byfield's sons, was one of the few persons who were by name stigmatized by Butler, in "Hudibras."



Astrologer Gadbury.

Shakespeare has no just cause to feel aggrieved at any imagined neglect on the part of his Sovereign, who proved herself most kind and appreciative. Catholic sources intimating indifference on his part must be received only for what they are worth. It was not without interest he is represented as cold towards his royal mistress. The most probable version is that

certain courtiers on the occasion of a private visit to the Queen had received him as one of a company of players, a point on which he was most sensitive, and although Her Majesty explained to him the mistake, yet he never could be brought to forget it. Not only was Elizabeth in every way condescending to her great master of literature, but



Astrologer Dee.

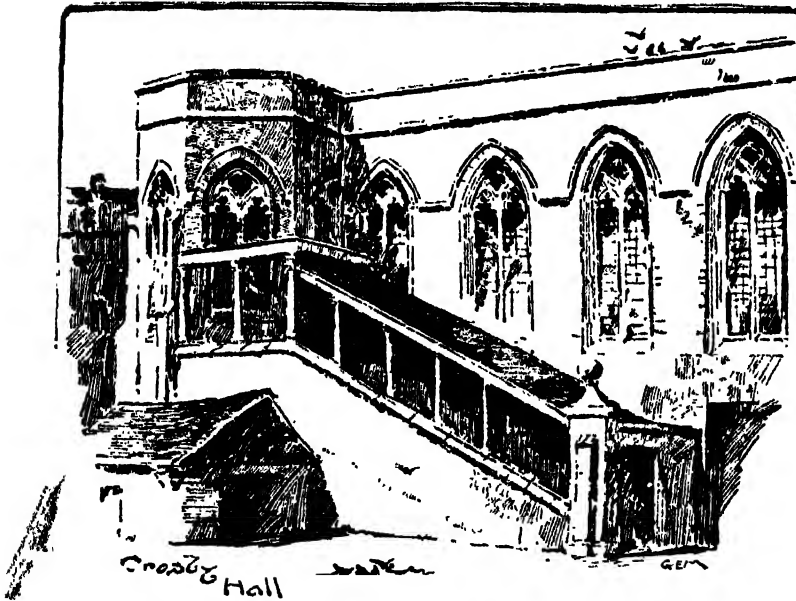
more than kind and considerate in endeavours to cause his over-looking the fancied slight.

James I. seems to have been a still more ardent lover of the drama than his immediate predecessor; and of all the contemporary writers for the stage, our great poet deservedly received the largest share of his admiration and patronage. On the 17th of May, 1603, close upon Shakespeare's arrival in London, a warrant was issued in his name, by which the Lord Chamberlain's company were taken into his own service, and under which they were thenceforward known as "the King's Players." In this document the first member of the company mentioned is "Lawrence Fletcher," and then follow "William Shakespeare, Richard Burbage," and six others. There can be no doubt that Fletcher was already known to King James, and that it was to that circumstance he owed this mark of Royal favour.

King James's appreciation of Shakespeare was rendered in his capacity as a great writer, not as an actor, and which prompted him to write what was called an "amicable letter." In the advertisement to Lintot's edition of Shakespeare's Poems, published in the year 1610, it is stated that this letter, "though now lost, remained long in the hands of Sir William Davenant, as a credible witness now living can testify"; and Oldys alleges that the Duke of Buckingham told Lintot that he had seen it in the possession of Davenant. In connection with this subject an anecdote is preserved of Shakespeare's adroitness and courtly tact. He was personating on one occasion the character of a king in the presence of Queen Elizabeth, at Richmond, who,

in walking across the stage, the honoured place in those days, as we have seen, for the higher portion of the audience, dropped her glove as she passed close to the poet. No notice was taken by him of the incident; and the Queen, desirous of knowing whether this procedure was the result of mere inadvertence, or a determination to preserve the consistency of his part, moved again towards him and again let her glove fall. Shakespeare stooped down to pick it up, saying, in the character of the monarch whom he was personating :—

"And though now bent on this high embassy,
Yet stoop we to take up our cousin's glove."



Shakespeare's plays were undoubtedly performed in this old Hall under his personal supervision.

He then retired from the stage, and presented the glove to the Queen, who is reported to have been highly pleased. It is well known that Elizabeth took great delight in witnessing the poet's dramatic productions; and a story is told of her having been so charmed with the humour and drollery of the character of Falstaff in the First and Second Parts of "Henry IV.," that she commanded the author to represent him in one play more, and show him in love. This anecdote bears all the semblance of truth looked at in the light of Queen Elizabeth's course of life. To this circumstance, if true, the world would be indebted for "The Merry Wives of Windsor."

Elizabeth died on the 24th of March,

1603; and, before the close of that year, Henry Chettle, in his "England's Mourning Garment," thus remonstrates with Shakespeare, whom he addresses under the name of Melicert, for neglecting to pay some poetical tribute to her memory :—

"Nor doth the silver-tongued Melicert

Drop from his honied Muse one sable tear,

To mourn her death that graced his desert,

And to his lays opened her royal ear.

Shepherd, remember our Elizabeth,

And sing her rape, done by that Tarquin, Death."

These lines showed that Elizabeth evinced in some marked manner her appreciation of the great genius who gave so great lustre to her reign. We believe she desired to be and was thoroughly just towards him.

The descendants of Dr. Dee made the most of his connection with the Queen, and it was said by an old clergyman of Mortlake that Her Majesty had interviews with one Simon Forman, also a noted astrologer of the time, who had been summoned to Richmond for purpose of comparing his forecasts with those of the crafty Dr. Dee, who had well plumbed the depth of his Sovereign's credulity. Forman is said to have named to Her Majesty that astrological ruling in his own case, pointing to his death by ac-

cidental drowning, and sure enough he did meet his death in the river Thames; but according to some, he expired suddenly in a boat whilst crossing the river; others averred that he was drowned; but so great was the dread of increasing necromancy, that the drowning was denied.

Many aver that Shakespeare's refraining from eulogy of the Sovereign whose death fell in his own time, was largely consequent on her connection with Dee and the other charlatans identified with him in working on her weakness. This was clearly the view of Catholics of the time and since, but it does not apply. It is certainly a mystery how such a woman could ever have been brought under their influence. She was not alone

in becoming one of Dee's dupes. Education in her case, as in that of others, was insufficient to act as preventive. Mary of Scots was also their victim, and even Burleigh could have his oracle cast. Surprise vanishes when it is remembered that Dee persuaded the Queen that he had foretold the defeat of the Armada. Constant repetition overruled her otherwise clear head, and she became a victim to these necromantic scoundrels. Further, it should be borne in mind that the whole community was in some measure affected, from the richest and greatest downwards. Even the honourable Stationers' Company pocketed a rich annual harvest from this source, their almanacs being little beyond astrological manuals in their worst form. How much better were they than Dee?

A deeply interesting link between Shakespeare and the performance of his plays at the Globe Theatre in his own time, comes to light through this same astrologer, Simon Forman. It is on record of his own leaving, that he attended a performance of the tragedy of "Macbeth," at the Globe Theatre, in April, 1611, and he tells us that both Macbeth and Banquo appeared on the stage on horseback (no doubt a wooden, or what was then known as a "hobby horse"), and, moreover, that on May 15th, or about a month afterwards, he witnessed a performance of the comedy of "The Winter's Tale," in the same theatre. He also informs us that he saw the tragedy of "Cymbeline, King of Britaine," performed. This valuable legacy of the necromancer establishes some very important facts as to the change and variety of order in the performances at the Globe. Variety was evidently the rule. Shakespeare, who with Burbage formed the governing body, did not press on the spirits of the actors by an incessant harping on a one-stringed bow; they had mastered the lines of more than one tragedy, and were ready at command to prove it by a fitting and ready rendering of the great thoughts then first given to the world, then pouring upon the world in a deluge, calling for the exercise of extreme diligence in their calling as in the exercise of their understanding and memory. It is clear from the astrologer Simon Forman's account of himself, that he was a constant frequenter of the Globe Theatre. Probably Dr. Dee, his brother fate-divinator, enjoyed with him the plays "Macbeth," "The Winter's Tale," and "Cymbeline," and that they would boat it together from Mortlake to London.

The palace formerly existing at Richmond rivalled any of the Royal residences in marked historical occurrences. The old name was Syenes, afterwards changed to Sheen, which is still the name of the part of Richmond, where the Duke of Fife has a residence. In the old Saxon, Sheen signifies shining, or beautiful, and old historians considered that the place was so designated from the magnificence of the Royal Palace, though, certainly, the natural beauty of the locality entitles it to any title expressive of beautiful scenery. Henry VII., who rebuilt the palace in 1501, and who, judging from Charlecote, must have employed roguish masons, or it



The Globe actors usually used the Custom House stairs as their landing place.

would have survived to be a stronghold until now, named it after his own title of Earl of Richmond. Henry I. had resided in the earlier existing palace. Edward II. is also said to have resided here; Edward III. also, who had a great partiality for the palace, keeping great state here, with a vast amount of bountiful hospitality. Here it was that he died on June 21st, 1377, in his 65th year, from grief at the loss of his son, the Black Prince. Only a few days before his death, the King received the Commissioners from Calais, who came to treat for peace between England and France. At the death of Edward III., his grandson, Richard II., son of the Black Prince, made the palace

his favourite summer residence, expending vast sums on improvements and buildings. Nothing is more interesting in connection with Richmond than its association with the poet Chaucer, who, in his capacity of Clerk of the Works to the Crown, lived in Richmond, superintending the new buildings. It is traditioned that he wrote the "Canterbury Pilgrims" here, which may explain the masons having used such abominable mortar, the poet's heart being probably more bent on verse immortalization than the creation of edifices to stand any test of time. King Richard, though a thoughtless demolisher, is not responsible for all the destruction; he



Associated with Shakespeare, through its pastor being traditioned as assisting him in art study at "Nonsuch."

surely must have left many buildings standing. His Gracious Majesty lived in great pomp, and with a degree of hospitality such as knew no parallel, entertaining many thousands of guests of every sort and kind, and, as may naturally be supposed, at ruinous expenditure. His Queen, Anne of Bohemia, died here. Old Stow records: "On June 7th Queen Anne died at Shine, and was buried at Westminster. The King took her death so heavily that, besides cursing the place where she died, he did also, for anger, throw down the buildings, unto which the former

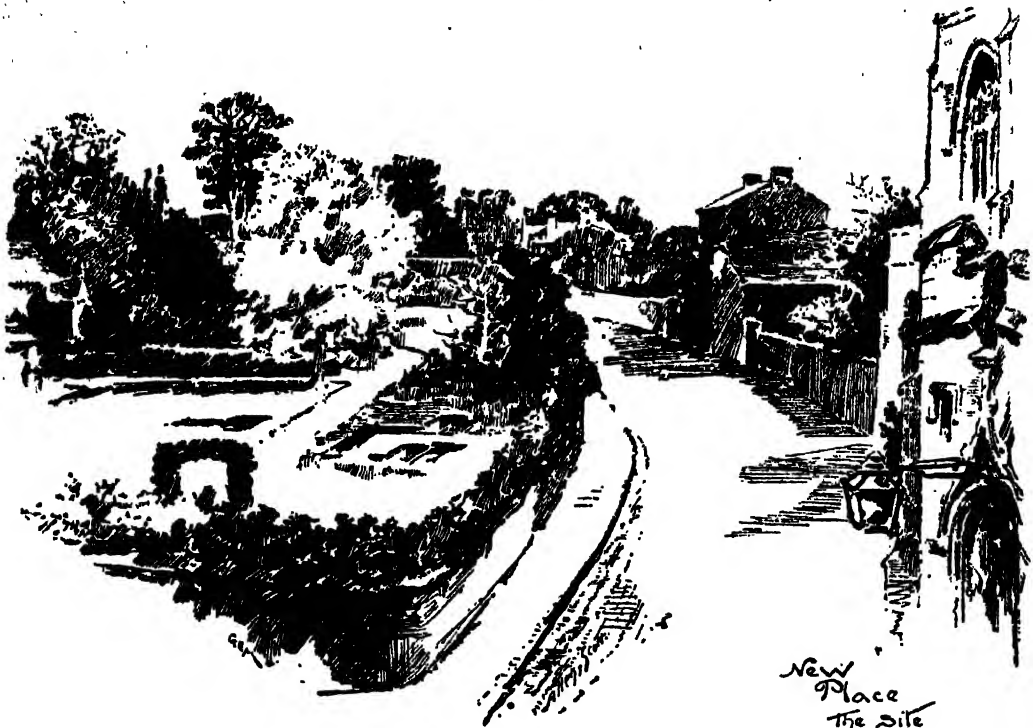
Kings, being wearied of the citie, were wont for pleasure to resort." Henry V., when Prince of Wales, lived at Richmond Palace, and rebuilt much of Richard's ruin-making. Henry VI., on his marriage with Margaret of Anjou, made great additions to the buildings, adding a fortress with a moat, and restoring much of Richard's demolitions. In 1461, Edward IV. resided here for a short time. Sir R. Baker's Chronicle, generally reliable, records: "In Henry 7, Ano. D.M. 1501, the King's manor of Shene was situat near the Thames side, was burned, which afterwards the sayd King sumptuously rebuilt, and called it Richmond, because his father and himself were Earles of Richmond." This sovereign, though of most penurious habits, had no scruples at the outlay. He died here, and was buried in his own magnificent tomb in Westminster Abbey. At his death there was a wholesale find of gold, jewels, and plate, amounting to close on two millions value, hoarded up in the palace. It became a favoured residence of Henry VIII., and here he kept his first Christmas after his accession, appearing for the first time in a tournament, held in the precincts of the palace gardens. In 1511, on New Year's Day, his Queen Catherine gave birth to a son here. In 1523, Charles V., Emperor of Germany, visited Henry VIII. here. Then came the *régime* of the ambitious, riches-loving Wolsey, who, fearing his own hoard, passed Hampton Court over to the King, receiving Richmond Palace as a solace. The Cardinal spent the Christmas of 1525 here, as a place of safety from the plague. At Wolsey's death, Henry VIII. granted the palace and £3,000 a year to his divorced wife, Anne of Cleves, who led a quiet, contented life, and even had his company at occasional *tête-à-tête* dinners. After Henry's death, the palace passed into the hands of Edward VI., who made it his frequent home, greatly preferring it to Windsor, so much so, that "he had it in mind to become his permanent home." In 1550 the marriage of Lady Anne Seymour, daughter of the Protector, was solemnized in the chapel of the palace, the King being present. In July of this same year, King Edward resided here as a hoped escape from the plague. Queen Mary was staying at Richmond when she heard of Wyatt's rebellion, and it was in this palace Mary and her council debated regarding the reception to be given to her future husband, Philip of Spain, and also spent a honeymoon. Memorable above all, Eliza-

beth was kept prisoner here in the early part of Mary's reign, on suspicion of instigating attempts upon the throne. Stow tells how she was conveyed in a barge from the Tower, by water to Richmond, and thence to Woodstock. Afterwards, on regaining her sister's confidence, Elizabeth received her at Hatfield. The last year of her reign Mary spent here, and took the fever, which proved fatal. Perhaps the brightest days of Richmond were when Elizabeth occupied it. Notwithstanding it having been her prison, it became her favourite home. It was here she received in unsurpassed grandeur the embassy from France to propose her alliance with the Duke of Anjou. Saddest of all reminiscences, it was within its walls she signed the death-warrant of Mary of Scotland, and on November 12th, 1586, the Queen here received the commissioners, who came to petition that the death sentence should not be carried out. Here also, in 1587, she was visited by the ambassadors of Henry IV. of France. During the whole of her long reign Elizabeth was continually at Richmond, one attraction being the visiting Dr. Dee, at Mortlake, who possessed a fascination over her otherwise strong mind. Early in 1603 she settled down in Richmond in ill-health, as is said, from grief at the death of her favourite, Essex. The tradition of the ring given to the Earl by the Queen under promise that, under whatever danger, it should yield him a protective audience, and which was never delivered, came to her knowledge early in her illness here. On her last fatal impeachment, he sent the ring by the hands of the treacherously jealous Lady Nottingham, who withheld it, and so caused the execu-

tion. At the death-bed of the lady, who had confessed the wrong, the Queen visited her, and with characteristic temper shook the dying lady violently, exclaiming, "God may forgive you, but I never will!" The Queen yielded up her spirit here on March 24th, 1603, and the last grand pageant occurring at Richmond was a water procession bearing her body to Westminster. James VI. of Scotland was proclaimed King of England here. The disease which proved fatal was caused by too frequent bathing in the Thames at foot of the palace. King Charles resided here for a while, but after a few years abandoned it for Windsor.

Fair Richmond, which, in Shakespeare's day, earned for itself the character of "beautiful," is not less so now than when he repaired to "Nonsuch" to study Italian art and the endless treasures there accumulated. Where else are such parks territorial, or a river studded with homes of so refined taste? Nor is its future likely to be shorn of the special charms which have earned its deserved celebrity. It numbers among its residents men possessed of enterprise and forethought, who will bring about immediate prevention of river pollution; this, with lock and weir, will endow it with attractions unattainable elsewhere near London. The name of Sir John Whittaker Ellis, as one of its most prominent residents, a man of culture, who has presented the town with an eligible site for its municipal buildings, is an assurance of progression with good taste. Resident in the former Buccleuch Villa, Sir Whittaker rendered good service in helping the purchase of the shrubbery plantations on the hill terrace, thus securing for ever to the town this feature of attraction.





New
Place
The Site
of
Shakespeare's
House.

NEW PLACE.



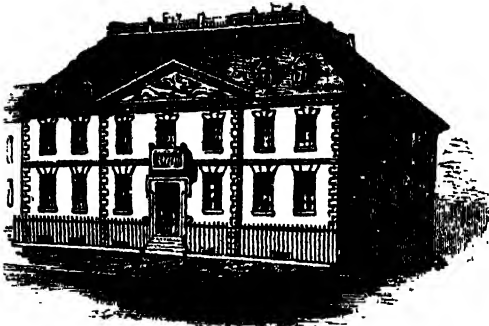
FIRST distinctly marked indication of Shakespeare's material prosperity appears in his purchase, in 1597, for £60, of New Place, one of the best houses in Stratford, and situated at the north-east corner of High Street and Chapel Street, nearly opposite

the Falcon Tavern, and also close to and looking upon the Guild Chapel. This mansion had been originally built in the reign of Henry VII., by Sir Hugh Clopton, in whose family it continued till 1563, when it was sold by them to a person named Botte, who again disposed of it to William Underhill. On its being purchased from the latter by Shakespeare in 1597, the poet had it thoroughly repaired and remodelled; but the statement made, that he changed the name to New Place is incorrect, it having been ascertained that the mansion bore that name at a period anterior to its becoming Shakespeare's

property. In the will of the old knight, Sir Hugh Clopton, it is styled "the Great House," and had previously been known under such title. Whatever it was as Shakespeare's home, disappeared under the ownership of one, Gastrell, who, on the theory that every man had the right to do as he liked with his own, laid the old house level with its foundations.

Dugdale, speaking of Sir Hugh Clopton, who built the bridge at Stratford and repaired the chapel, says, "On the north side of this chapel was a fair house built of brick and timber by the said Hugh, wherein he lived in his later days and died." Shakespeare by his will left it to his daughter, Mrs. Hall, with remainder to her heirs male, or, in default, to her daughter Elizabeth and her heirs male, or the heirs male of his daughter Judith. Mrs. Hall died in 1649, surviving her husband fourteen years. She, when seven years a widow, occupied the house when Queen Henrietta Maria, Queen of Charles I., in 1643, coming to Stratford in the course of her triumphant march from Newark to Keinton in royal state with a part

of the royal army, taking up her quarters at this house, then called New Place, and which was unquestionably even then the most considerable private residence in the town. The Queen held her court here, and was herself at Stratford for three days, arriving on 11th July



Shakespeare's Home, New Place, as represented in an old engraving.

at the head of upwards of two thousand foot troops and a thousand cavalry, with a hundred waggons, and a train of artillery. It was a memorable time for Stratford, for she was met here by Prince Rupert, at the head of another body of troops, the most stirring event the town had ever witnessed. The Corporation bore a part of the cost of entertaining Her Majesty, who left Stratford on the 13th, meeting the King in the vale of Keinton, near Edgehill, both reaching Oxford on the 14th, July, 1643.

The engraving of this house given above, which is a traditional representation of it in 1599, and first published by Malone in 1790, as taken "from a drawing in the margin of an ancient survey made by order of Sir George Carew, afterwards Baron Carew, of Clopton, and Earl of Totness, and found at Clopton, near Stratford-upon-Avon, in 1786," is, as Phillips says, "either a modern forgery or at least no representation of Shakespeare's residence. Neither the Carews nor the Cloptons had any kind of interest in New Place in the latter part of the sixteenth century, and it is in the highest degree improbable that a representation of it should have been attached, in 1599, to a plan of an estate situate in another locality. Malone's copy of the view was not taken from the original, but from a drawing furnished by Jordan, from whom another one published by Ireland in 1795 was also derived." It would appear, therefore, that very little authority exists for the authenticity of the sketch.

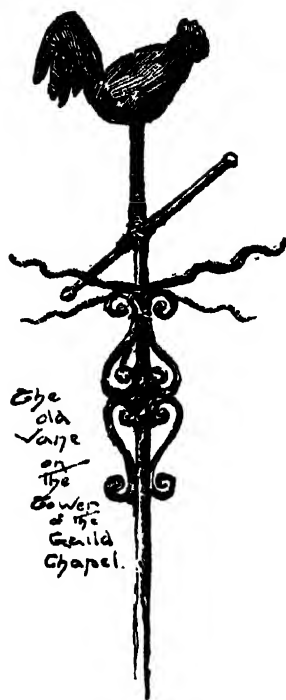
Little light can be thrown as to the neigh-

bours' living around New Place during Shakespeare's time. One only can be named. This is Julius Shaw, who was born in 1571, his father being what was called "a wool driver," and, according to whose assessment for rates, must have occupied a good residence. Mention is several times made of him in the Chamberlain's accounts. He was elected a member of the Town Council in 1603, became Chamberlain in 1610, alderman in 1613, and bailiff in 1616. He was a successful man, and in his bailiff year purchased land from a neighbour to the value of £180. He was re-elected bailiff in 1627, and died in June, 1629. He was evidently respected, as he is referred to in the MS. Council book as a man of "honesty and fidelity," possessing, as his colleagues record, "their good opinion." Julius Shaw's house was next door but one to Shakespeare's, and, as he was one of the witnesses to the poet's will, it may reasonably, under the circumstance of so close neighbourhood, be assumed that he was more than a mere acquaintance. Shaw's next-door neighbour on the northern side, in 1599, was one John Tomlins, of whom there is as little known as of the nameless one who lived next door to Shakespeare in Chapel Street. Phillips gathered together a mass of details as to the holdings and definitions of the properties around, and which are interesting to the few, but to the many only as establishing definitely the position of Shakespeare's holding. More than this, Phillips was enabled to raise the means for purchasing the Shakespeare sites. If the traditioned sketch of New Place be what is assumed, we can correctly arrive at a knowledge of its surroundings, and picture to ourselves Shakespeare in his own loved home, and it will be more pleasurably realized in the absence of dry details of all his neighbours' holdings, through whom and by whom acquired in former and since generations. Chief among his outlook objects was the grim tower and entrance to the Guild Chapel—the chapel itself and the line of schoolrooms and almshouses, extending down the street, all of which were fraught with highest interest to him through their associations of boyhood. Opposite New Place, on the south-west end of Chapel Street, at the corner of Scholar's Lane, is a house now in apparently as good condition as then, when it was a private residence. Since those days, it has been converted into a hostelry, and the writer speaks from experience in saying a very

comfortable one for such as visit Stratford for other than desires of costly entertainment. Some time between 1645 and 1668, this close neighbouring home to that of the immortal was converted into a tavern, and hung on high Shakespeare's crest of the Falcon. Its earliest host was one Joseph Phillips, who, it is believed, was the first Boniface to welcome under his roof such wayfarers as desired to honour the birth-place, to which so many hundreds of thousands of pilgrims have since wended their way. More than this, worthy Joseph Phillips had the good repute of vending none but good wine and home-brewed, and that the spirits he dispensed were not wickedly overcharged of unholy alcohol. He was, moreover, descended from the maternal side of Thomas Quiney, and, therefore, connected with the poet's father. The oldest deed of the "Falcon" property bears date 1640, and describes it as "consisting of a house and garden lately in the tenure, use and holding of Mrs. Catherine Temple, and now in the use and occupation of Joseph Boles, gent." Clearly, it was then no home for the wanderer. Catherine Temple, however loving her disposition, did not keep a Falcon rest. For some years after, it held on to its privacy, and, indeed, until Joseph Phillips hoisted his flag. In 1681, it is mentioned as "all that messuage or tenement, with the appurtenances called by the name of 'the Falcon'"; in 1685, as commonly called by the name of the "Falcon house"; and in 1687 Joseph Phillips reigned there in full glory. It has been twice what is called "restored." There does not exist any representation of it as in Shakespeare's time, all the engravings are merely fanciful, even that given by Ireland in 1795 is entirely so. We believe the interior of the house to be much as it was when the great bard lived opposite, and from almost every window of his home could peer through the lattices of the now "Falcon." Little did he dream of his own crest being hung out so near the old home; his was such loving nature he would rejoice in knowing that none but good cheer was afforded from within. The writer's first knowledge of this hostelry was when a sweet Anne Page charmingly presided over its destinies. Ralph Waldo Emerson dropped in at the "Falcon" during our stay, in order to get a look at what he termed "shadows of the home of the great one." Finding that sweet Anne Page held our destinies, he brightened up, and rubbing

his hands, expressed deep anxiety to see the fair one. Having achieved an interview, gratification was evident in his continually exclaiming, "Anne Page! sweet Anne Page!"

Every window of the front and side of New Place House looked upon the old church of the Holy Guild, the summit of whose tower was crowned with a large weathercock. The great master never looked out on the street without confronting this reminder of ever occurring mutation of all mundane affairs. However constant of purpose and design this Holy Guild weathercock, the master of New Place had no other friend ever so present to his eye.



"Where had you this pretty weathercock?"

—*Merry Wives*, act iii., scene 2.

"What weathercock?"

—*Love's Labour Lost*, act iv., scene 1.

The following Latin rhymes, from a MS., circ. 1420, preserved in the Cathedral of Oehringen, were printed in Coventry during Shakespeare's life-time, and probably came under his eye when living at New Place. The free and easy translation is evidently quite modern:—

Multi sunt Presbyteri qui ignorant quare
Super domum Domini gallus solet stare.
Quod propono breviter vobis explanare,
Si bullis benevolas aureas mihi dare.

Since Presbyters many are ignorant quite,
Why the Cock on the Steeple is so frequent a sight,
I briefly propose a few words to indite,
Which to those who may hear, will set it all right.

*Gallus est mirabilis hic creatura,
Et rara presbyteri illius est figura,
Qui præ est parochiæ animarum cura,
Stans pro suis subditis contra nocitura.*

A Cock, truly wonderful creature is he,
An excellent figure as ever can be,
Of each goodly parson, so faithful to see,
Standing up for the right, in true dignity!

*Supra ecclesiam positus gallus contra ventum,
Caput diligentius erigit extantum;
Hic Sacerdos, ubi scit demonis aduentum,
Illuc se objiciet pro grege bidentum!*

Stationed over the Church, the Cock without tail
His head holds aloft in spite of the gale!
The parson does likewise and though Devils assail,
When they see that he's *game*, they will tremble
and quail.

*Gallus, inter ceteros alites cælorum,
Audit super æthera cantum Angelorum:
Tunc monet excutere nos verba malorum,
Gustare et percipere arcana supernorum.*

The Cock, too, like other birds frequently hears,
The music sublime of harmonious spheres;
Thus the parson he teacheth to lay aside cares,
To attend to his sermons, and more to his prayers.

*Quasi rex in capite gallus coronatur;
In pede calcitrans, ut miles, armatur:
Quanto plus sit ænior pennis decoratur:
In nocte dum concinit leo conturbatur.*

As a king, on his head he is royally crowned;
As a knight, with his *spurs* he parades around;
As his years, so his feathers of gold do abound,
When he crows in the night, Lions wake at the
sound!

*Gallus regit plurimam urbem gallinarum,
Et sollicitudines magnas habet harum;
Hic Sacerdos, concipiens curam animarum,
Noceat et faciat quod Deo sit carum.*

The cock has around him a feminine crowd,
For whom with solicitude great he is bowed;
Thus the parson the sex, so giddy and proud,
Tells them what, and what is not, divinely allowed.

*Gallus gramen reperit, convocat ævores,
Et illud distribuit inter cariosos:
Tales discant clerici pietatis mores,
Dando anis subditis scripturarum flores.*

The cock findeth barley, and calleth his train,
And then what he findeth distributes again;
The parson from this has a lesson so plain,
That to tell him at length, would be labour in vain.

*Gallus vobis prædicat, omnes vos audite,
Sacerdotes, Domini serbi, et Hebrite,
Ut vobis ad cælestia dicatur, Venite:
Præsta nobis gaudia, Pater, eterna vitæ.*

The cock preacheth to you; then all of you hear,
Bishops, parsons and people, let each one give ear;
He calleth you up! with his clarion clear,
Up, to a world where 'tis better than here!

It was in 1597 that Shakespeare purchased this his home, and which was then known as *The Great House* at Stratford-upon-Avon, described as "one messuage, two barns, two gardens, and two orchards, with appurtenances." The same year he filed a



An authentic coloured glass relic of the house, New Place. The initials, William and Anne, may be seen in the Museum.

bill in Chancery against the son of the mortgagee who unjustly detained Asbies, the hereditary property of the poet's mother.

The same year his father, formerly in declining circumstances, applied for a grant of arms, and passed from the condition of a yeoman to that of a gentleman. Here is proof that the income of the poet enabled him to reinstate the fortunes of his family.

In the grant he is called "John Shakspeare, now of Stratford-upon-Avon, in the co. of Warwick, gent., whose parent, great-grandfather and late antecessor, for his faithful and approved service to the late most prudent prince Henry VII., of famous memory, was advanced and rewarded with lands and tenements given to him in those parts of Warwickshire, where they have continued by some descents in good reputation." Next year the poet is assessed for a tenement in the parish of St. Helen's, Bishopsgate.

Legal contention with the Lamberts, in regard to their refusal to accept payment of this mortgage, occasioned great money cost to the Shakespeares at a moment when they were suffering from the effect of the Lucy persecution. It was ordained, however, that the brilliant abilities of the young poet, even at this early stage of his career, should vouchsafe a deliverance. He would be familiar with all the points of the case, and his mind having been directed to law as the means through which right should triumph, he would probably pause in literary labour until the end was secured.

The exact time of Shakespeare's final return from London to his dear Stratford home cannot be fixed. Greene's memorandum shows that he was in London on the 17th November, 1614, and the probability is he left it close on that date. He yearned for his country employments, and to pass the remainder of his days in tranquil retirement, though we do not presume to intimate that such a mind could ever have contemplated idleness. "The latter part of his life," says Rowe, "was spent, as all men of good sense will wish theirs may be, in ease, retirement, and the society of his friends," and he adds what cannot be doubted, that "his pleasurable wit and good nature engaged him in the acquaintance, and entitled him to the friendship of the gentlemen of the neighbourhood." He is assumed to have been of a lively and companionable disposition; and his long residence in London, amid the bustling and varied scenes connected with his public life, independently of his natural powers of conversation, could not fail to render his society most agreeable and desirable.

The profession of actor, in however small a degree adopted by him, would bring directly home to his memory the incurable littleness of this our mortal destiny. The mimic representation of passion upon the stage must have a natural tendency to recall the hollowness of the hardly less unsubstantial realities which it mocks. Talma said he never could look an audience in the face without the continually recurring thought—where will all these heads be in another hundred years? A very startling question, most assuredly. We believe that some such idea must often have arisen in the teeming, meditative mind of Shakespeare. To his rapid apprehension we are all but a troop of poor players. His own life was, after all, but a hurried, perplexed show; and he, too, in spite of the miracles of his genius, had but a shadowy passage over this mysterious stage of time.

But this skyey being had his own firm hold of the fixed, solid earth. How small may be the threads which bind the mightiest and the most discursive spirit to the shores of this mortality! Shakespeare was a most careful man of business, as we are perpetually reminded by nearly all the petty incidents in his career with which we have become acquainted. Here, alone, he is for us an actual, living, unmistakable man. The direct controlling influence in his daily life,

the special incentive to all his labours, was the desire to accumulate money (trash!) as a means to secure those social advantages to which the possession of wealth, in the opinion of Englishmen, is the surest title. This was the counterpoise to the highly wrought emotional and meditative tendencies of his nature. It was by this practical instinct that he held on to the realities of human existence—that, in its agitations and its struggles he was a steadfast actor, and not a mere amazed observer and a passionate dreamer—that he resisted the



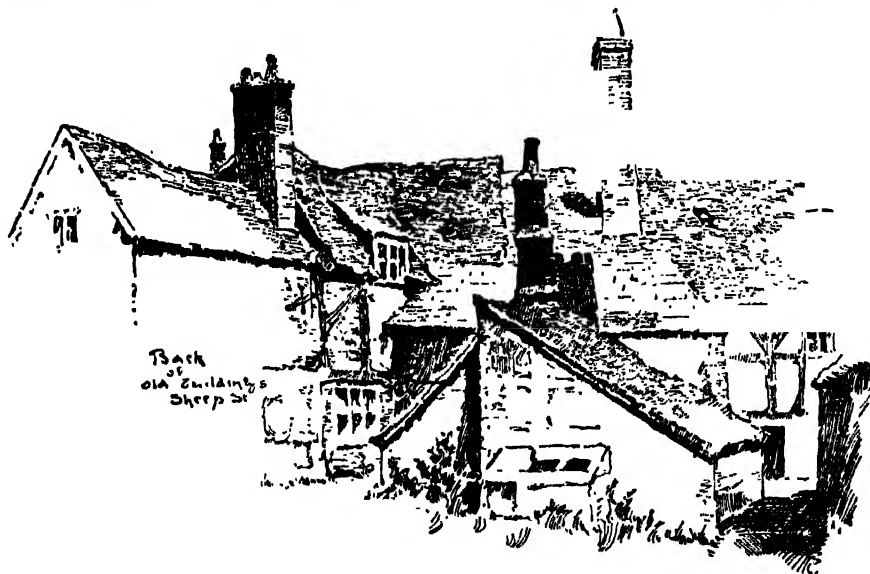
ceaseless pressure of a restless imagination—that he offered a determined front to the ever-rushing invasion of the wonder and the mystery of this changeful world of time and place. It was the familiar landmark that fixed for him his own little home in the infinite ocean of life.

No wonder that he selected Stratford as the scene of the tranquil close of his days. It must have been inexpressibly endeared to him by the memories of boyhood. His wife and children remaining here during his

theatre life in the Metropolis would impress it with charms, heightened by his doubtless regular periodical visits to it as his real home, doubly dear to such an impressionable nature, and where his rural longings could be indulged. From the moment he purchased New Place it is manifest that he must have regarded his native town as his principal place of residence, and this purchase was made at a very early period in his dramatic career. Away, then, with the popular tradition which associates with his memory a jovial, riotous life in London. No careless frequenter of taverns could ever have exercised the vigilant prudence which enabled an occasional actor and a writer for the stage in the days of Queen Elizabeth to become,

such a nature, he must have instinctively shrunk from habitual convivial excesses. We do not mean to say that he was not a man of social temper, but we believe that that temper was very considerably under the restraint of a cautious sagacity and an innate refinement of feeling.

Shakespeare's determined renunciation of London society leads us to the adoption of another conclusion. The general character of his conversation is a subject on which we have received no decisive evidence of any kind, but on which we are all naturally led to speculate with a special interest. The best conjecture we can form is that it only very partially reflected the magnificence of his genius. He never took any deep root



before he had yet passed the rich autumn of his years, the founder of a considerable fortune. All that we learn, too, of the poet's own tastes is opposed to such a supposition. He appears to have been by nature a careful observer of the external decorum of life. He had evidently a decided predilection for gentle blood and gentle manners. That he was no admirer of the mob is one of the few conclusions with respect to his personal feelings which we can draw with a reasonable certainty from his dramas; and, with the unanimous concurrence of the commentators, we may infer, from the Sonnets, that he felt pained and humiliated by his connection with the stage, because it excluded him, as he believed, from familiar intercourse with a refined and congenial society. With

in the great centre of English social life,—his were higher duties, higher aims than small talk and wretched gossip, the delight of too many. Higher aspirations ruled, grander conceptions of duty towards mankind. At the Mermaid Club, or at any other social gathering, he would have recalled the author of the poems, and of the early comedies, rather than the creator of any of his greater and more characteristic dramas. This is a conclusion which, as it seems to us, is also implied in the notice of Jonson. Of the two dramatists, Jonson himself would be the greater talker. Amazed as he must have felt at the manifestations of a mighty and an utterly unaccountable genius, he evidently thought he possessed some sort of personal advantage over Shakespeare, and this im-

pression very probably arose in some degree out of the general result of their more social and familiar intercourse, which would rate conversational power far higher than its worth.

SOCIAL CONDITION OF THE KINGDOM IN SHAKESPEARE'S TIME.

Without entering into any lengthened description of the social condition of the people at the period when Shakespeare was born, we may be sure it could be no effeminate age to produce such a man. Commerce was crippled by monopolies, and of the arable land of the country not more

Bristol were going out or coming in from the remotest corners of the globe. The fairest fields, the richest cities, the proudest strongholds lay in this region. The silk manufacture had been established in London upwards of two hundred years; but as yet upwards of a century and a half must elapse before an adventurous John Lombe erects a silk-mill at Derby, and so begins the factory system in England. And that mighty cotton manufacture, upon whose prosperity the feeding of so many millions of people depends, at the birth of Shakespeare had no existence in the realm. Our

Fac-similes. The signatures and marks of Stratford Aldermen referred to at page 76.

than one-fourth was in a state of cultivation; but large flocks of sheep were kept on account of their wool. Manufactures were only in their infancy. Woollens had been spun and woven only on a small scale throughout the country; Taunton, in Somersetshire, being at that time the most famous for its fabrics of any town in England; and the West of England was to the world's commerce of that day what the North is now. While Liverpool was still a swamp, and Manchester a straggling hamlet; when Leeds was a cluster of mud huts, and the romantic valley of the Calder a desolate gorge; the streets of Taunton, Exeter and Dunster resounded with arts and industry; and the merchant ships of Bridgwater and

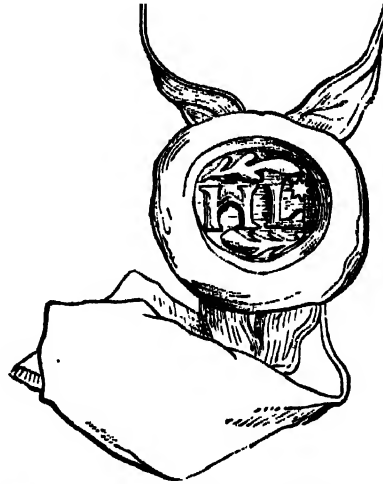
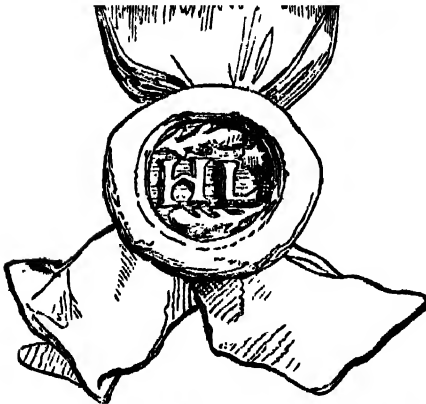
principal foreign trade transactions then lay with the Netherlands; but already the merchant princes of our island were seeking to bind us in the peaceful links of commerce with all lands. Agriculture was then in the rudest condition; the flower garden was but little cultivated, the parks of the nobility and gentry serving them for pleasure grounds; some valuable esculent herbs and fruits had indeed been recently introduced into the country, amongst which were turnips, carrots, salads, apricots, melons, and currants; but potatoes were not yet cultivated in Britain, and even for a hundred years afterwards were scarcely known as an article of food; and peas were in general brought from Holland; so that old Fuller

might well observe that they were "fit dainties for ladies, they came so far, and cost so dear." The cultivation of flax was not neglected; that of hops had been introduced, but as yet our principal supply was from the Low Countries. The old dungeon-like castles of the nobility were giving way to the more commodious halls or mansions, but the houses of the people improved slowly. The art of manufacturing the very coarsest sorts of glass had only been introduced into England seven years; common window-glass and bottles being all that was attempted, the finer articles of glass-ware

hibited it, with other disorderly games, by public proclamation, we yet find Queen Elizabeth's father, Henry VIII., "Defender of the Faith," building a cockpit at the palace of Whitehall, and James I., to whom our translation of the Bible is dedicated, amusing himself with cockfighting *twice a week*; and the learned author, Roger Ascham—the University Orator at Cambridge, and the tutor of Queen Elizabeth—was a passionate admirer of this disgraceful sport. Then at Shrovetide, what a torturing of poor poultry did cock-throwing and thrashing-the-hen occasion! Both Catholic

William
Shakespeare

W^m Shakespeare



Signatures of Shakespeare to a Deed of Purchase. Originals in the Guildhall, London.

being still imported from Venice. Few houses had glass for their windows, and even in towns of importance chimneys were an unknown luxury, the smoke being allowed to escape as best it could, from the lattice, the door, or from openings in the roof. On a humble pallet of straw would the poor husbandman repose his wearied limbs; and wheaten bread was not used by more than one-half of the population.

The amusements of the people, for the most part, were gross and debasing. Cock-fighting had the patronage of the learned and powerful of the land; for, though Edward III., as early as 1366, had pro-

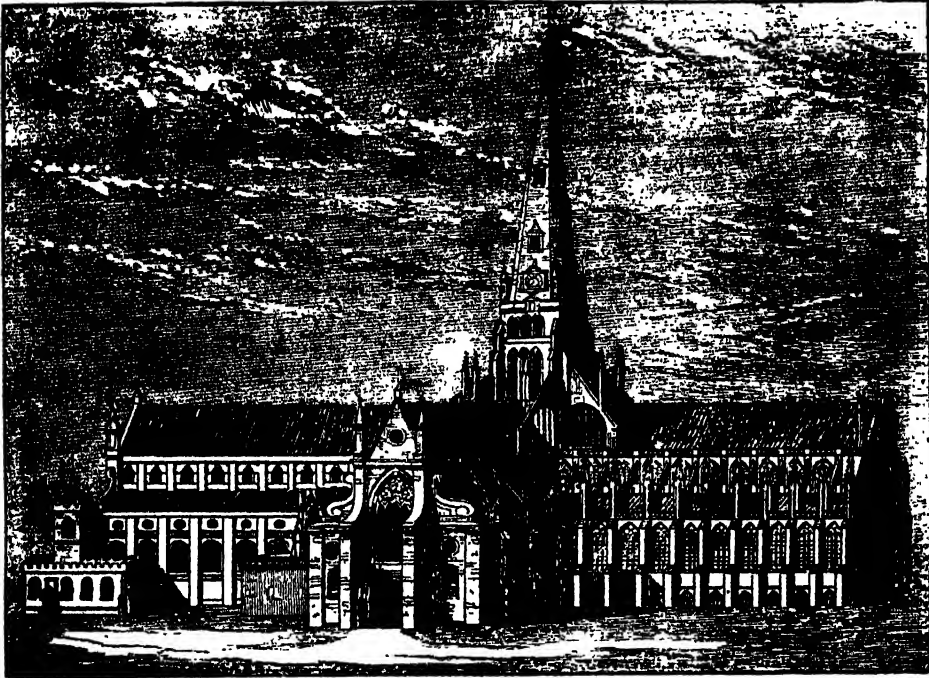
Mary and Protestant Elizabeth derived pleasure from the baiting of bulls and bears; and many a fair lady of that day might say with Slender, in the "Merry Wives of Windsor,"—"I have seen Sackerson loose, twenty times." Even the gentle but unfortunate Mary Queen of Scots, when rendered so weak by her unjust imprisonment as not to be able to walk without support, according to the report of Sir Amias Powlet, her keeper (June 3rd, 1586), was sometimes "carried in a chair to one of the adjoining ponds, to see the diversion of duck-hunting"; and, perchance, at times, compared the hard fate of the poor per-

secuted fowls with the harder and more lingering one of her own. Such was England, and of such its people, great and simple, in the day of the great master of wisdom.

Our loved friend, the late Charles Knight, thus refers to his last years :—

The happy quiet of Shakespeare's retreat was not wholly undisturbed by calamity, domestic and public. His brother Richard, who was ten years his junior, was buried at Stratford on the 4th of February, 1613. Of his father's family his sister Joan, who had married Mr. William Hart, of Stratford,

actors" but "little satisfaction in their endeavours to learn something from him of his brother." The story of Oldys is clearly apocryphal, as far as regards any brother of Shakespeare's. They were a short-lived race. His sister, indeed, survived him thirty years. The family at New Place, at this period, would be composed, therefore, of his wife only, and his unmarried daughter Judith; unless his elder daughter and his son-in-law formed a part of the same household, with their only child Elizabeth, who was born in 1608. That Shakespeare assisted



ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL AS IN SHAKESPEARE'S DAYS.

was probably the only other left. There is no record of the death of his brother Gilbert; but as he is not mentioned in the will of William, in all likelihood he died before him. Oldys, in his manuscript notes upon Langbaine, has a story of "One of Shakespeare's younger brothers, who lived to a good old age, even some years, as I compute, after the restoration of King Charles II." Gilbert was born in 1566; so that, if he had lived some years after the restoration of Charles II., it is not surprising that "his memory was weakened," as Oldys reports, and that he could give "the most noted

with all the energy of his character in alleviating the miseries resulting from the great fire in 1614, and in the restoration of his town, we cannot doubt. John Combe, the old companion of Shakespeare, died at the very hour that the great fire was raging at Stratford. According to the inscription on his monument, he died on the 10th of July, 1614. Upon his tomb is a fine recumbent figure executed by the same sculptor who, a few years later, set up in the same chancel a monument to one who, "when that stone is rent," shall still be "fresh to all ages." Shakespeare was at

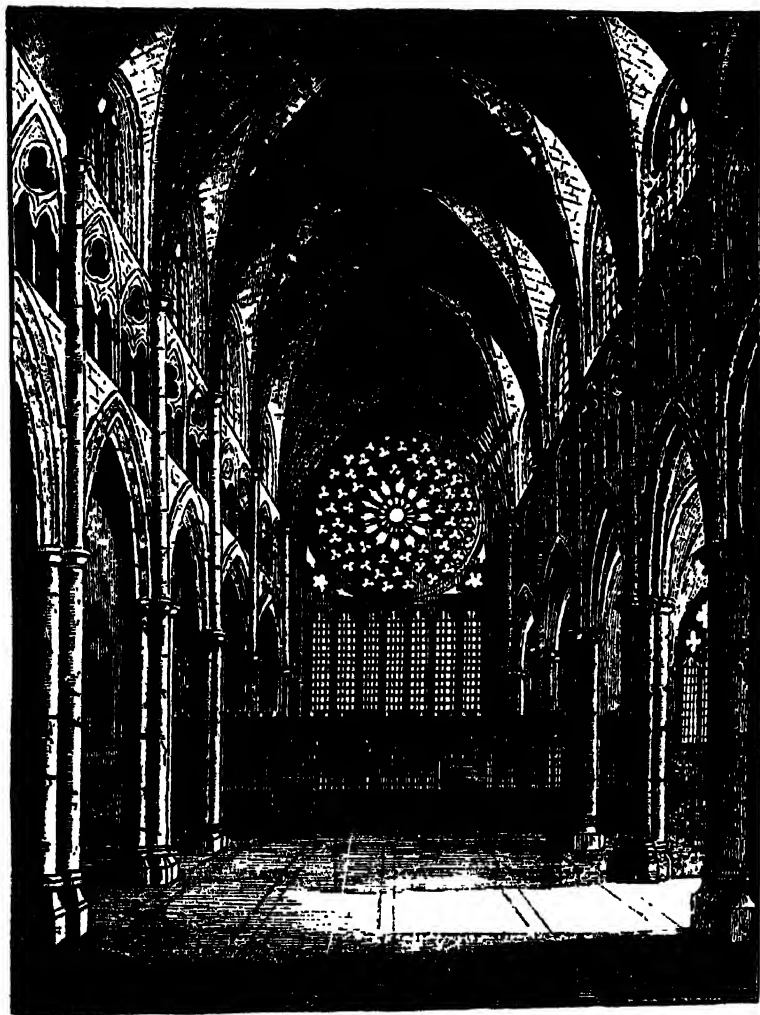
this period fifty years old. He was in all probability healthful and vigorous. His life was a pure and simple one; and its chances of endurance were the greater, that high intellectual occupation, not forced upon him by necessity, varied the even course of his tranquil existence. His retrospections of the past would, we believe, be eminently

language by many polished poems, now slept the sleep of death. The Reformation in religion, for which Wickliffe had contended two hundred years before, had spread wider than his scattered ashes; and the lion-hearted Luther—

"The solitary monk who shook the world"—
had died in peace only eighteen years before.

The Protestant prelates, Hooper, Ridley, Latimer, and Cranmer, with numerous other martyrs for conscience sake, had perished at the stake only nine years ago.

One great object the people had already accomplished, in obtaining possession of the Scriptures in the vulgar tongue; and no one can calculate the benefits which civilization has derived in every way from that simple boon. The printing-press—even in its then rude construction, a mighty auxiliary of human enlightenment—had only been introduced into England some eighty-seven years; and the venerable Caxton, our first English printer, had rested from his labours for half a century, in his grave at Westminster. And yet how great were the results which that printing-press had already accomplished! It had given the Bible and many of the Classics to the people, and even then was beginning to cause a demand for new contributions to



INTERIOR OF ST. PAUL'S AS IN SHAKESPEARE'S DAYS.

happy. Chaucer and Gower, who may be styled the parents of English poetry—had left the earth more than a century and a half when Shakespeare was born, A.D. 1564; and John Lydgate had rested in his grave about one hundred and thirty-four years. Skelton, Surrey, Wyatt, and others of lesser fame, after aiding in refining their native

literature; so that henceforth an author would not be altogether dependent on a single patron, as before. Even in the provinces, as well as in the Metropolis, were printing-presses springing up; for after the establishment of Caxton's press, in 1477, we find others at London and St. Albans, in 1480; at York, in 1509; at Beverley, in

1510; at Southwark, in 1514; at Cambridge, in 1521; at Tavistock, in 1525; at Winchester, in 1545; at the castle of Bristol in 1546; at Ipswich and Worcester, in 1548; at Canterbury, in 1549; and at Greenwich.

The personality of Shakespeare forms undoubtedly the most perplexing subject to which the Shakespearean student can direct his contemplation. The evidence is so various that we believe it must light us to a fair general knowledge of his life and of his character, if we will only look at it in a clear and unprejudiced spirit. In his own numerous writings we cannot fail to find manifestations not only of his genius, but of his tastes and his temper. The antiquarian discoveries, too, will afford us an important aid in our attempt to realize and define this wonderful personality. Those discoveries are, no doubt, strangely limited and disconnected, but they come to us from a great variety of quarters; and small as they are, when taken separately, if we should find, as we think we are sure to find on a careful inquiry, that they all point to the same general conclusions, we may place even greater confidence in their accidental testimony than in more detailed revelations proceeding from fewer sources and arranged upon some more preconceived plan.

The indefatigable Phillips has brought together a very large amount of previously unpublished documentary evidence, illustrative, not only of New Place and its vicissitudes, but of the habits and manners of the people of Stratford; and the state of the town in and after the time of Shakespeare, and, in face of the darkness which surrounded the great object of his researches, still the Shakespeare historian toiled on with unceasing industry and unfailing hope. Among the most interesting materials are those which

show the condition of Stratford in the time of Shakespeare; and the sound inferences he draws from them to account for his almost sudden death, regarding which Phillips, after patiently weighing all the statements and traditions, concludes that in all human probability he died of typhoid fever, arising from the bad drainage of the town and the sadly neglected state of Chapel Lane, which flanked New Place. The filthy condition of this lane for a long series of years is proved



REAR OF LEICESTER HOSPITAL, WARWICK.

Shakespeare is known to have frequently visited one bearing his own name living close on the site of this hospital.

by the town archives, showing numerous startling revelations; and this view is confirmed by the cast taken after death, which shows the countenance unemaciated, as it would have been after a short illness. Stratford has only during the present century, and, indeed, of late years, put on the garb of modern cleanliness, in which she now appears at the sacrifice of much that was picturesque and Shakespearean.

At the death of Mrs. Hall, the property of New Place descended to her only child Elizabeth, the wife of Thomas Nash, who

a boy, he assisted in the revenge of breaking the reverend destroyer's windows. The filities were put an end to by the Rev. Gastrell quitting Stratford in 1757; not without confirming the principle of doing what he liked with his own, pulling the house to the ground in which Shakespeare and his children had lived and died.

There is no good end to be served in execrating the memory of the man who deprived the world of the pleasure of looking upon the rooms in which the author of some of the greatest productions of human intellect had lived, in the common round of humanity—of treading reverentially upon the spot hallowed by his presence and by his labours. He intended no insult to the memory of Shakespeare; and, indeed, thought nothing of Shakespeare in the whole course of his proceedings. He bought a house and paid for it. He wished to enjoy it in quiet. People with whom he could not sympathise intruded upon him to see the gardens and the house. In the gardens was a noble mulberry-tree. Tradition said it was planted by Shakespeare; and the professional enthusiasts of Shakespeare—the Garricks and the Macklins—had sat under its shade during the occupation of one who felt that there was a real honour in the ownership of such a place. The Rev. Mr. F. Gastrell wanted the house and the gardens to himself. He had that strong notion of the exclusive rights of property which belongs to Englishmen, and especially to ignorant Englishmen. Mr. Gastrell was an ignorant man, though a clergyman.

From 1597 until 1602, during which time the fertility of his invention poured forth some of the grandest of his productions, and popular judgment placed him far above all his contemporaries, his progress to wealth and fame was remarkably rapid. In 1602 he purchased 17 acres of arable land in Stratford for the sum of £320, somewhat more than £1,000 in modern computation; five months after, in the same year, one Walter Getley surrendered a house to the poet in Dead Lane, Stratford; at Michaelmas term, William Shakespeare, gentleman, as he is now generally styled, bought from Hercules Underhill, for £60, a property consisting of a messuage with two orchards, two gardens, two barns, and their appurtenances. In May, 1603, when James I. came to the Crown, a privy seal was granted by the King to his servants "Laurence Fletcher, William Shakespeare, Richard Burbage, Augustine

Philippe, John Hemmings, Henry Condell," and the rest of their associates, "to use and exercise the art and faculty of playing comedies, tragedies, histories, interludes, morals, pastorals, stage-plays, and such other like as they have already studied, or hereafter shall use or study," in their usual house, the Globe, or elsewhere within the King's dominions. And James, who was by no means the fool that posterity represents him to have been, showed his discrimination by frequently commanding Shakespeare's plays to be acted at Court. In the account of "The Revels at Court," notices are found of the following:—"Othello,"



"Merry Wives of Windsor," "Measure for Measure," "Comedy of Errors," in 1604; "Love's Labour's Lost," "Henry V.," "Merchant of Venice," twice in 1605; at Whitehall, "King Lear," which had already in 1608 passed through three editions; in 1611, "The Tempest" and "The Winter's Night's Tale." In 1613, on the marriage of James's daughter Elizabeth with the Prince-palatine, the representation of Shakespeare's plays furnished a great part of the entertainment; among them are "The Tempest," "The Twins' Tragedy" (supposed to be the "Comedy of Errors"), "Much Ado About Nothing," "The Winter's Tale," "Sir John

Falstaff," "Othello," and "Julius Cæsar." In 1605 the poet added to his property at Stratford by purchasing the unexpired lease of the tithes of Stratford and the adjoining hamlets for the sum of £440 sterling; in modern computation £1,400.

It is not known at what period he retired from the stage and settled finally in Stratford. By the spring of 1613 he had lost his father, his mother, and his only son. Two daughters remained: Susannah, married in 1607 to Dr. Hall, a physician at Stratford; and Judith, married to a vintner named Quiney, of the same place, in 1616. During the last three years of his life, notices of his purchases and employments become more rare. In 1613 the Globe Theatre was burnt, and it is reasonably assumed that many of the poet's manuscripts perished in the flames.



In the year 1598 we find Abraham Sturley, a burgess of Stratford, writing thus to a friend in London: "It seemeth that our countryman, Mr. Shakespcare, is willing to disburse some money upon some odd yard land or other at Shottery"; and nine months afterwards we see Richard Quiney, another Stratford man—whose son subsequently married Shakespeare's younger daughter—applying to him for a loan of £30, under no apprehension, apparently, that he would be refused the money, although £30 were then fully equivalent to £120 at the present time. It is not a little curious that this letter of Quiney is the only one addressed to

the poet now known to be in existence. It is carefully preserved in the Shakespearean Museum in the birthplace and runs thus:—

"Loveinge countreyman, I am bolde of you, as of a ffrende, cravinge your helpe with xxx. li. uppon Mr. Bushells and my securitee, or Mr. Myttens with me. Mr. Rosswell is nott come to London as yeate, and I have especiall cawse. You shall ffrende me muche in helpeinge me out of all the debttes I owe in London, I thanck God, and muche quiet my mynde, which wolde nott be indebted. I am nowe towards the Cowrte, in hope of answer for the dispatche of my buyseness. You shall nether loose creddyt nor monney by me, the Lorde wyllinge; and nowe butt perswade your-selfe soe, as I hope, and you shall nott need to feare, butt, with all hartie thanckfulness, I wyll holde my tyme and content your ffrende, and yf we bargaine further you shal be the paie-master yourselfe. My tyme biddes me hastin to an ende, and soe I comitt thys (to) yowr care and hope of yowr helpe. I feare I shall not be backe thys night ffrom the Cowrte. Haste. The Lorde be with yow and with us all, Amen! ffrom the Bell in Carter Lane, the 25 October, 1598.

"Yowrs in all kyndenes,

"RYCH. QUINEY."

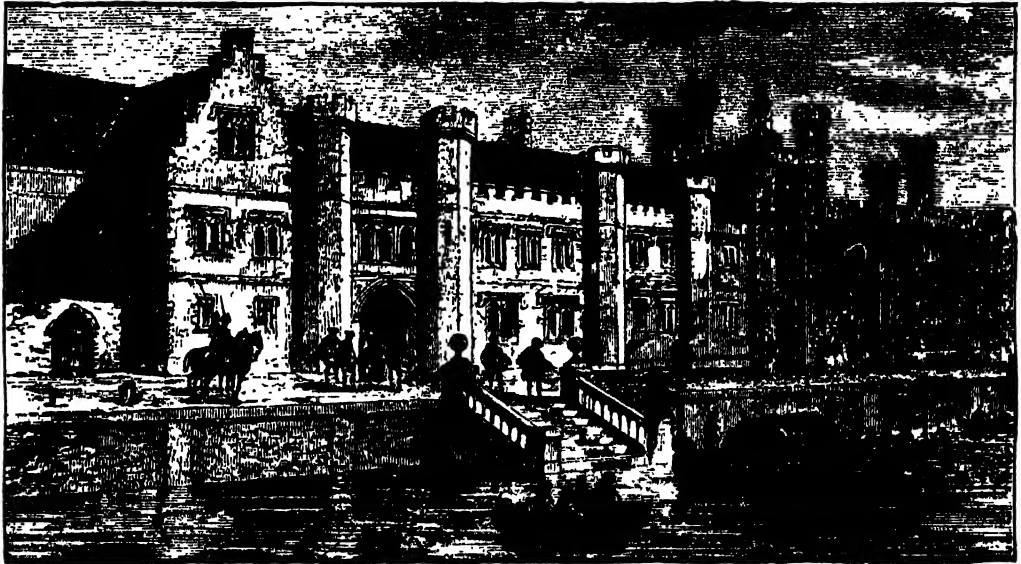
"To my loveing good ffrend and contreyman Mr. Wm. Shackespere deliver thees."

This is the only known scrap of paper that Shakespeare ever read. It is a precious document—one short glimpse which we catch of the poet. There is not the slightest ground for the conjecture, founded upon it, that Shakespeare at one period of his life was a money-lender. "Loving good friend," and "loving countryman," is not quite the way in which a usurer would be addressed upon money-matters at any period of the world's history. Nor does the tone of the rest of the note countenance the supposition. Better, surely, is it for us to regard this letter as showing Shakespeare in the light of a friend helping a friend, possessed with that love, which is so marked in all his writings, and that sympathy which is the finest trait in our human nature.

The site of New Place, together with some ground adjoining, which formed part of Shakespeare's garden, has now, like the birthplace in Henley Street, been purchased by public subscription, and become the property of trustees. The original foundations of the two mansions—the house

occupied by Shakespeare, and that built at a later period by Sir John Clopton—have been excavated and disclosed to view. Various relics found here and in the adjoining garden are deposited in the museum in Henley Street. But it is at the top of the garden only that any remains can now be traced of the permanent abode of Shakespeare from 1609 to 1616. It was demolished more than a hundred and fifty years ago, and another house built on the site, which, again, was taken down about the middle of last century. Since then the land has continued to be nearly a waste and unregarded till the subscription enabled the excavations to be made in 1862. The uncovered remnants of the second house are of no interest, but any morsel disclosed, even of a lump of

of the house indicates what would now be called a deep bay window on its southern front. There, undoubtedly, was Shakespeare's study, and through that casement many and many a time, in storm and in sunshine, by night and by day, he must have looked out upon that grim square tower and weathercock, the embattled stone wall, and the four tall Gothic windows of that dark mysterious temple of the Holy Guild, ever face to face with him. The ground plan of the residence is revealed by the buried walls; and there remains the well, yet flowing with pure and sparkling water. The stone quoin, six feet from the bottom, still testifies to the originality of this precious fountain whence Shakespeare quenched his thirst and cooled his brow.



The Palace at Greenwich. Shakespeare came hither from Stratford by command of Queen Elizabeth, and was also at Isleworth with Vicar Byfield the year prior to his death. These facts prove conclusively his habit of returning to his home at Stratford every season.

brick and mortar, which was once part and portion of Shakespeare's home, seem to the enthusiast worthy of notice and preservation. But there is much more. As one stands on the hallowed ground which was doubtless his garden, how enchanting is the knowledge that he daily trod this space, and here looked off upon the strong square tower of the Guild Chapel on the close opposite corner, not with mortal mode of vision, but with his way of looking, and then from the air around the old grey tower comes down the dreamy charm of fanciful nearness to him. The configuration of the excavations

Shakespeare's Welcombe property adjoined the lands of the Cloptons, and we may suppose he took great interest in any of the events in that family to which importance was attached by his friends and neighbours. About a mile from Stratford, in a fine upland, looking right down on Shottery, stands the stately old mansion in which this notable family dwelt; and there is a tradition in connection with it which appears to have had a considerable effect on the dramatist's mind. In the time of the plague which beset Stratford when Shakespeare was about two months old, Charlotte Clopton, a

sweet-looking girl, with pale gold hair combed back from her forehead, and falling in wavy ringlets on her neck, and with eyes that "looked like violets filled with dew," had sickened, and to all appearance died. She was buried with fearful haste in the vaults of Clopton Chapel, attached to Stratford Church; but the sickness was not stayed. In a few days another of the Cloptons died, and him they bore to the ancestral vault; but as they descended the gloomy stairs, they saw by the torchlight Charlotte Clopton, in her grave clothes, leaning against the wall; and when they looked nearer she was indeed dead, but not before, in the agonies of despair and hunger, she had bitten a piece from her white round shoulder! It is remarkable that such a Capulet tomb should have actually been in the Holy Trinity Church, and it is not improbable that the catastrophe in "Romeo and Juliet" owed its suggestion to this story of the Clopton household.

On what is called the "Ancient House," which stands on the west side of the street, not far from New Place, he must often have looked, as he strolled past to the Inns of the Boar and the Red Horse. This building, dated 1596, survives, notwithstanding some modern touches of rehabilitation, as a beautiful specimen of Tudor architecture in one, at least, of its charming features, the carved and timber-crossed gable. This is a genuine piece of antiquity, and vies with the Grammar School of the Guild, under whose pent-house the poet could not have failed to have passed whenever he went abroad from New Place. Julius Shaw, one of the witnesses to his will, lived in a house close by the Grammar School; and here, it is reasonable to think, Shakespeare would often pause for a chat with his friend and neighbour. In Dead Lane (now called Chapel Lane) he owned a little low cottage, bought of Walter Getley in 1602, and only destroyed within the present century. These and hundreds of facts suggesting the poet as a living man, and connecting him with our human, every-day experience, are seized on with peculiar zest by the pilgrim in Stratford.

Shakespeare, it is absolutely certain, spent in comfort the last few years of his life here in his home, New Place. A variety, and a perfect concurrence of testimony leave no room for doubt upon that point. But the precise period of his complete removal from London, like many occurrences of his daily round of life, is unknown. The final depar-

ture of the great dramatist from the principal scene of his wonderful achievements was, apparently, as unostentatious and as unnoticed as the arrival there of the obscure and needy young man who was to win by the labour of a few years the greatest name in literature. It is very likely that at some time before his death he ceased to have any personal interest in the fortunes of his former fellow-proprietors. It is probable that he suffered no great pecuniary loss by the burning of the Globe Theatre in the year 1613. His income at Stratford from land, houses and tithes is computed to have amounted to between £200 and £300 a year, which would then have been nearly equivalent to between £1,000 and £1,500 of our money. If he still felt—which seems very doubtful—any strong interest in theatrical pursuits, he must



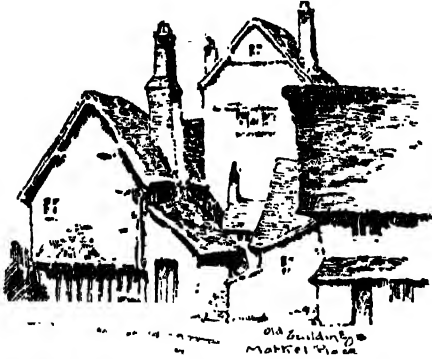
Near New Place.

have found himself, in his retreat, surrounded by a somewhat uncongenial society.

In looking upon the ruins achieved by Parson Gastrell, it is impossible to resist the conclusion that it was ordained of God that man should not look on his abodes. Here, at but a short distance, the Charlecote Mansion stands out bold and perfect as at the period of erection. The homes of the humblest cottagers whose hamlets are associated closely with his life and the memory of his parents and wife, are, in the numerous sketches running through this volume, brought clearly home to eye and mind, thus enabling us to read, as it were, the biography and the scenes of his youth and manhood under the truest of all aspects.

DEATH.

On the 25th of March, 1616, Shakespeare signed his will. It was drawn up on the 25th of the January preceding, and the necessary change was afterwards made in



the name of the month. It is very probable that it was framed with a special reference to the approaching marriage of his daughter, as it contains a number of provisions which appear to have been introduced in the expectation of that event. He is there described as in "perfect health and memory"; and so he was, perhaps, at the time the document was actually written; but the three signatures of his name seem to indicate that they must have been traced by an invalid. The end, at all events, was now at hand. On the 23rd of April, 1616, just as he had completed the fifty-second year of his age, the great poet passed from the scene on which his genius had shied so astonishing a light.

Dr. John Hall, who, we may feel assured, attended the death-bed of his father-in-law, has left manuscript notes of remarkable cases which came under his observation in the course of his professional practice; but the curious in Shakspearean lore are here pursued by their usual ill-luck; those notes do not begin until the year 1617, the year immediately following the poet's death.

On the 25th of April, 1616, two days after the poet's death, his remains were interred in the chancel of Stratford Church. Over them was placed a flat stone, bearing the maledictory lines already referred to.

The public grief at his death, the belief in his happy end, and the veneration for his memory, are in this monumental couplet tersely expressed. His fame must have been great during life, when it could be written that in judgment he equalled Nestor, in genius Socrates, in art Virgil.

Referring to the prudence and worth of Shakespeare's private character, there is one collateral proof that deserves notice. If we look around among his companions, fellow-actors, or writers, we observe an honourable contrast in his career. With few exceptions, we find them to have been wild livers, licentious brawlers, and coming to evil ends—a record of follies and crimes, from which it is a relief to turn to the quiet home of the retired dramatist at Stratford-on-Avon. Shakespeare seems to have passed unscathed through the miserable ordeal of stage-life in those days, the general records of which are an instructive warning, rendered the more notable by his exceptional escape from the perilous state. Ben Jonson slew a comrade, and was always in troubled waters; Marlowe, only two months older than Shakespeare, was killed in a miserable brawl at the age of thirty-one; "Pyeboard" Peele was a sheer profligate; Robert Greene, Ford, Lyly—we might give a sad list of contemporary players and writers for the stage whose histories would curiously illustrate the habits of the times in which Shakespeare lived, not without moral instruction.

The only near relatives of Shakespeare who survived him were his wife, his daughter Susanna, who was married to Dr. John Hall; his granddaughter, Elizabeth Hall; his daughter Judith, who was married to Thomas Quiney; and his sister Joan, who married a hatter in Stratford, named William Hart.

Of Gilbert Shakespeare, no other record remains than the brief registry of his baptism. "I have no doubt," says Skottowe,



"that Gilbert lived till after the Restoration of Charles II." "The register, indeed," says the same author, "mentions the burial of Gilbert Shakespeare, adolescens, in 1611-

12, who might or might not have been the son of the elder Gilbert. Truly is it said, there is something melancholy in the brief histories of a parish register! What reveries they give rise to as one looks upon them in an idle hour! how imagination tries to depict the beings whose entrance or exit from the stage of life they chronicle! and when one is in a contemplative mood—a state of mind they are indeed apt to beget—how touching, to a feeling heart, is the less than “tombstone information” they give. “Every line,” as Ord truly observes, “chronicles a whole life, its fears, hopes, enjoyments, aspirations. What a record of humanity—what heart-histories—what wondrous biography!” And such is all the history we now possess of Gilbert, the brother of William Shakespeare! We may *guess* him to have been a player like his eldest brother William, and his youngest brother Edmund.

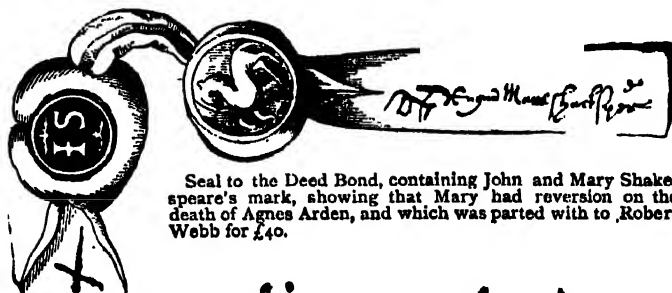
The poet's wife died on the 6th of August, and was buried on the 8th of the same month, in the year 1623. The bequest which he makes to her in his will, of his “second - best bed,”—doubtless that in which as husband and wife, they had slept together, the so-called “best” being reserved for visitors,—is intelligible enough, and needs none of the disquisitions of the would-be wise. We know that his wife was entitled, by law, to a jointure—the property being principally freehold, the widow, by the ordinary operation of the law of England, would be entitled to what is legally known as “dower”—and that it was not, therefore, necessary he should have made any express provision for her maintenance.

Dr. Hall died on the 25th of November, 1635, and Mrs. Hall on the 11th of July, 1649. Their only child, Elizabeth, was married, first, in 1626, to Thomas Nash, who died in 1647, without issue; and, secondly, in 1649, to John (afterwards Sir John) Barnard, of Abington, in the county of Northampton, by whom also she had no family. She herself died in the year 1670,

and with her was extinguished the lineal descent from Shakespeare.

Judith Quiney, the poet's second daughter, had three sons, all of whom she lost in their infancy or their early youth, while her own life was prolonged until the commencement of the month of February, 1661-2. She was buried on the 9th of that month.

Joan Hart, the only child of John and Mary Shakespeare who appears to have survived their eldest son, William, died in the month of November, 1646. She had several children, and there were, not many years since, descendants of her's at Stratford, where they lived in very humble, and even indigent circumstances.



Seal to the Deed Bond, containing John and Mary Shakespeare's mark, showing that Mary had reversion on the death of Agnes Arden, and which was parted with to Robert Webb for £40.

Shakespeare

Richard Burbage

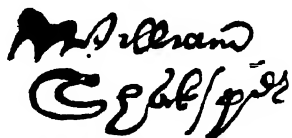
John Hemmings

Facsimile of the signatures of Burbage and Hemmings, Shakespeare's friends.

The above brief statement sums up all the fortunes of the family for which the great poet had once so earnestly laboured, and for whose continued worldly prosperity he had, by the last act of his life, most carefully provided. But “all flesh is grass,” and glory is but an idle name. His freehold estates, which he devised in the first instance to his eldest daughter, were strictly entailed; but the entail was afterwards barred, and the property passed into the hands of strangers.

The pleasant task is completed, and worthier pens record how the great bard sleeps beside his native Avon, which glides placidly onwards to blend its waters with the Severn, and flows still with the same unruffled current past the grey walls of Trinity Church, as when the remains of the poet were borne

thither to their last resting-place. Like the perennial course of its waters, the genius of Shakespeare maintains ever the same constant flow, and diffuses its ennobling influence over the varied fields of literature and intellect. Changed is the aspect of the land where he dwelt; many of the social and political institutions of his time, like most of its material edifices, have crumbled to dust; and in the progress of industry and knowledge, a wondrous change has taken place in the face of nature, in manners and customs, and in modes of thought. But the elements of which all these are composed have ever remained unaltered. Still does the spring bring forth its bud, the summer its flowers and foliage, the autumn its fruit and golden harvest, and the winter



Signature of Shakespeare to Deed of Conveyance of house in Blackfriars, 10th March, 1612-13.

Scaled and delivered by the said William Shakespeare, William Johnson, and John Jackson, in the presence of Will Atkinson, Ed. Overy, Robert Andrews, Scr., and Henry Lawrence, servant to the same Scr.

Original Deed in City of London Guildhall.



its rains, its snows, and its tempests. The human heart still throbs with joy or with sorrow; its desires, aversions, and motives, whatever external form they may assume, have been in every age essentially the same.

The plenitude of Shakespeare's genius reveals itself in this, that he discloses to all classes of men the secrets of their several conditions without identifying himself with any one of them. He did not need to pass through each of the lower stages in order that he might survey them all from the summit of his intellectual supremacy.

When the pen dropped from Shakespeare's hand, when his last, mortal illness mastered the strength of even his genius, the world was left powerless to describe in writing his noble and unrivalled characteristics. Hence we turn back upon himself, and endeavour to draw from his works the only true records of his genius and of his mind.

Even in his lifetime this seems to have been foreseen. In 1664, in an epigram addressed to Master William Shakespeare, occurred the following lines:—

"Besides in places thy wit winde like Mæander
When (*whence*) needy new composers borrow
more
Thence (*than*) Terence doth from Plautus or
Menander,
But to praise thee aright I want thy store.
Then let thine own words thine own worthe
upraise
And help t' adorne thee with deserved baies."

His contemporaries appear as though they were scarcely conscious of the great and brilliant luminary of English literature which was shining still, or had but lately passed away; and as though they could not anticipate the admission which was to succeed their dull perceptions of his unapproachable grandeur, or the eager desire which his would generate of knowing even the smallest details of its rise, its appearance and departure. Is it not amazing that dramas written for the Globe Theatre, wretchedly lighted, incapable of grandeur even from want of space, and without any of the more mechanical and artistic resources and accessories, which belong to a later age, should be capable of bearing all this additional weight of lustre and magnificence without its being necessary to alter a word or a passage from their original delivery?

In dealing with the simple record of his death, these pages shall not be desecrated by refutations of the slander-subject asserted as its immediate cause. There never has been any or the smallest justification for the fabricated story of a merry meeting between the poet and Ben Jonson, and over-indulgence on the occasion having brought on an illness resulting in death. His gentle loving spirit towards all men, his truthfulness of character and temperate habits from beginning to end of life, should at least have spared his memory this insult. The majority of the lives of leading literary men, like most others of the higher middle class of his day, were often stained by indulgence, falsely termed "merriment." Coming to London so young a man, and mixing during these, his first days of Metropolitan life, largely among actors, he knew well, and had learned how it predominated among the class who then, as now, are specially open to the danger of over-sociability. He had seen its devastating effects on many homes. Then, as now, it was the demon haunting too frequently the lives of this class, most to be

SHAKESPEARE'S TRUE LIFE.

dreaded and avoided. The writer boldly asserts that he did avoid it, and triumphed through example even to the last. References to passages of his writings tell us so, though his memory shall not be insulted beyond mention of the fact. Stratford, like other places, was in his day impossible of drainage, fever continually ravaged it, polluted water engendered typhoid fever, the true cause of his death.

Among our native writers, no one questions that Shakespeare is supremely pre-eminent, and but few will not assign him as lofty a position in the whole range of modern European literature. No other nation possesses among its writers any one name to which there is no rival claim, nor even an approximation of equality, to make a balance against it. He has established his claim to the noblest position in English literature as the great master of our language, as almost its regenerator, quite its refiner—as the author whose use of a word stamps it with the mark of purest English coinage—whose use of a phrase makes it household and proverbial—whose sententious sayings, flowing without effort from his mind, are quoted as axioms or maxims indisputable.

Shakespeare's laurels, after the lapse of three hundred years, are greener than ever; his name and writings will maintain their exalted position till time itself shall be no more. With him virtue was ever victorious; undaunted under every suffering, and triumphant even in death. His name will reverberate through the world—

"From day to day,
Until the last syllable of recorded time."
—*Macbeth*, act v., scene 5.

In days when political strife is all-absorbing, a lover of his fellows and a gifted master in ancient and modern lore such as a Rosebery, here meets on common ground

with a Goschen or a Lord-Treasurer W. Smith, whose plain common sense and utter absence of pretentiousness in thought and language mark him as a profound Shakespearean; so also the Octogenarian Gladstone, whose wondrous stores of literature are inexhaustible as their torrent application soars above his contemporary generations, can speak with the wisely solid and patriotic



Old Orchard at Wilmcote, formerly a portion of the Arden estate: traditioned as a favoured spot of Shakespeare's father and mother, as afterwards of himself.

Gascoign Salisbury, with sympathies engendered of no other studies. They ever drink at this perennial stream of wisdom. True nobility, as a Southampton of Shakespeare's time, survives through associateship with the peers of literature, when, but for these, oblivion would ages earlier have overtaken them.

[SHAKESPEARE'S WILL.]

Mij
Vicesimo Quinto Die January, Anno Regni Dñi nñ Jacobi unice Rx Anglie
&c. Decimo quarto & Scotie xlix^o Annoq, Dñi 1616

T. W. Shakespeare

In the name of god Amen I William Shakespeare of Stratford vpon Avon in the countie
of warr gent in pfect health & memorie god bē prayes doe make & Ordayne this
my last will & testam^t in man^r & forme followeing That ys to saye first I Comend
my Soule into the hands of god my Creator hoping & assuredlie beleeving through
thouelic merit^ts of Jesus Christe my Saviour to be made ptaker of lyfe everlastinge
And my bodye to the Earth whereof, yt ys made Itē I Gyve & bequeath
vnto my ~~sonne~~ & Daughter Judyth One hundred & fyftie pounds of lawfull
English money to be paid vnto her in man^r & forme followeing That ys to

in discharge of her marriage porton

saye One hundred pounds, w^{ch} in one yeare after my deceas w^{ch} considera^on
after the Rate of twoe Shillings in the pound for soe long tyme as the same
shalbe vnpaid vnto her after my Deceas & the fyftie pounds Residewe thereof

of
vpon her Surrendring, or gyving of such sufficient securitie as the overseers of
this my Will shall like of to Surrender or grante All her estate and Right that

shall discend or come vnto her after my deceas ^{that shee} or, nowe hath of in or to the
Coplehold teite w^{ch} thappten^{ts} lyeing and being in Stratford vpon Avon
aforesaied in the saied countie of warr being pcell or holden of the manno^r of
Rowington vnto my Daughter Susanna Hall & her heires for ever
Itē I Gyve & bequeath vnto my saied Daughter Judith One
hundred & fyftie pounds more if she or Anie issue of her bodie be
Lyvinge att thend of three yeares next ensueing the Daie of the Date
of this my Will during w^{ch} tyme my executo^r to paie her considera^on from
my deceas according to the Rate aforesaied And if she Dye w^{ch} in the saied
terme w^{ch}out issue of her bodye then my Will ys & I Doe gyve & bequeath
One Hundred Pounds thereof to my neece Elizabeth Hall & the fiftie
Pounds to be sett fourth by my executo^r during the lief of my Sister
Johane Harte & the vse & pfitt thereof cominge shalbe payed to my saied
Sister Ione & after her deceas the saied l^y shall Remaine Amongst the
children of my saied Sister Equallie to be Devided Amongst them But
if my saied Daughter Judith be lyving att thend of the saied three yeares or
anye yssue of her bodye then my will ys & soe I Devise & bequeath the

by my executors & overseers

saied Hundred & fiftie pounds to be sett out, for the best benefit of her & her
the Stock to be

issue & a not, paid vnto her soe long as She shalbe marryed & covert Baron
by my executo^r & overseers but my will ys that she shall have the considera^on
yearelie paid vnto her during her lief & after her deceas the saied stock and
considera^on to bee paid to her children if she have Anie & if not to her
executo^r or assigns she lyving the saied terme after my deceas Provided that if
such husband as she shall att thend of the saied three yeares be marryed vnto or attaine
after doe sufficientlie Assure vnto her & thissue of her bodie lands Awnswereable to
the porton by this my will gyven vnto her & to be adiudged soe by my executo^r
& overseers then my will ys that the saied C^h shalbe paid to such husband as
shall make such assurance to his owne vse Itē I Gyve & bequeath vnto my saied
sister Ione xx^s & all my wearing Apparell to be paid & deliv^d w^{ch} in one year

the house

after my Deceas And I Doe will & devise vnto her, w^{ch} thappten^{ts} in Stratford wherein
she dwelleth for her naturall lief vnder the yearlie Rent of xii^s Itē I gyve & bequeath

W. B. Lann
Jan 1616

vnto her three sonns William Hart
 fyve pounds A peece to be payed wⁱⁿ one ycare after my deceas
 to be sett out for her wⁱⁿ one ycare after my deceas by my execut^r
 & directors of my executors for her last p^{er}son until her
 & then the same wth the insurance thereof to be paid vnto
 the said Elizabeth Hall (except my brod silver & gilt beke)
 her It^{em} I gyve & bequeath vnto her All my Plate that I now
 have att the date of this my will It^{em} I gyve & bequeath vnto
 the P^{er}son of Stratford aforesaid tenn pounds to Mr. Thomas
 Combe my Sword to Thomas Russell Esquler fyve pounds &
 to frauncis Collins of the Borough of warr in the countie of warr
 gent thirteene pounds Sixe shillings and Eight pence to be paid wⁱⁿ
 one Ycare after my deceas It^{em} I gyve & bequeath to Hamlett Sadler
 to William Reynolds gent xxvj' viij' to buy him A Ringe
 Tylor sheld' xxvj' viij' to buy him A Ringe to my godson William
 Walker xx' in gold to Anthonye Nashe gent xxvj' viij' & to Mr.
 & to my fellowes John Hemyngs Richard Burbage & Henry Cundell xxvj' viij' Apeece to buy them Ringes
 John Nashe xxvj' viij' in gold It^{em} I Gyve will bequeath & devise vnto
 for better enabling of her to p^{er}forme this my will & towards the p^{er}formans thereof
 my Daughter Susanna Hall All that Capitall message or teinte
 in Stratford aforesaid
 wth thap^{er}tenn^{es} called the newe place wherein I nowe Dwell
 & twoe Messuaga or teintes wth thap^{er}tenn^{es} scitvat lyeing & being
 in Henley Streete wⁱⁿ the borough of Stratford aforesaid And all
 my barnes stables Orchards gardens lands tch^{ts} & hereditam^{ts} whatsoe^r
 scituat lyeing & being or to be had Receyved p^{er}ceyved or taken
 wⁱⁿ the towns Hamletts Villaga fields & grounds of Stratford
 vpon Avon Oldstratford Bushopton & Welcombe or in anie of them
 in the said countie of warr And alsoe All that Messuage or
 teinte wth thap^{er}tenn^{es} wherein One John Robinson dwelleth scituat
 lyeing & being in the blackfriars in London nere the Wardrobe & all
 oth^{er} my lands teints & hereditam^{ts} whatsoev To have & to hold All &
 singler the said p^{er}miss^{es} wth their App^{er}tenn^{es} vnto the said Susanna
 Hall for & during the terme of her naturall lief & after her
 deceas to the first sonne of her bodie lawfullie ysueing & to the
 heires Males of the bodie of the said first Sonne lawfullie
 ysueinge & for defalt of such issue to the second Sonne of her
 bodie lawfullie issueinge & to the heires Males of the bodie of the
 said Second Sonne lawfullie ysueinge and for defalt of such
 heires to the third Sonne of the bodie of the said Susanna
 Lawfullie ysueing & of the heires males of the bodie of the said third
 sonne lawfullie ysueing And for defalt of such ysue the same soe
 to be & Remaine to the fourth Sonne fyfth Sixte & Seaventh
 sonnes of her bodie lawfullie issueing one after Anoth' & to the heires

Wm. Shakspeare

23. 12. 1614. Let cousin and my friend
 my cousin Shakspeare my friend
 I have beene thinking of you
 with great pleasure & I hope
 you are well & happy
 I am your friend
 Wm. Shakspeare

The Diary of Thomas Greene, Town Clerk of Stratford, shows that expostulatory letters were addressed by the Corporation of Stratford against the enclosure of land at Welcombe, favoured by Shakespeare; one of these, dated 17th November, 1614, says, "My cousin Shakespeare coming yesterday to London, I went to see him how he did."
 The following also, dated 23rd December, 1614: "A Hall. Letter wrytten to Mr. Shakespeare, with almost all the companies' hands to it. I also wrytte of myself to my cousin Shakspear, the coppies of all our actes, and then also a note of the inconveynences wold happen by the inclosure."

Males of the bodies of the saied fourth th Sixte & Seaventh sonnes
lawfullie yssueing in such maner as yt ys b^e Lymitted to be & Remaine
to the first second & third Sonnes of her & to their heires males
And for defalt of such issue the saied p^{er}sons to be & Remaine to my
sayed Neece Hall & the heires Males of her bodie Lawfullie
ysueing & for defalt of such issue to my Daughter Judith
& the heires males of her bodie lawfully ysueinge And for
defalt of such issue to the Right heires of me the saied WILLIAM

Item I gyve vnto my wief my second best bed wth the furniture
Shackspere for ever. Item I gyve & bequeath to my said Daughter
Judith my broad silver gilt boile All the Rest of my goods Chattels
Leases plate Jewels & household stufte whatsoever after my Detts and
Legasies paid & my funerall expences discharged I gyve devise
& bequeath to my Sonne in Lawe John Hall gent & my Daughter
Susanna his wief whom I ordaine & make execut^{rs} of this my

Last will & testam^l And I doe intreat & Appoint ^{the said} Thomas Russell Esquier & ffrancis Collins gent to be overseers hereof And doe Revoke All forin wills & publishe this to be my last will & testam^l. In Witness whereof I have herevnto put my

Scale the Date & Years first above written.

Witness to the publishing
hereof, Fra : Collyns
Julus Shawe
John Robinson
Hamnet Sadler
Robert Whattcott

Probatum corā Magri Willmī Byrde
legum, Dcorē Commiss^m &c. xxij^o die
mens Junij Anno Dni 1616 Juram^t
Johannis Hall vnus ex &c. Cui &c.
De bene &c. Jurat.—Resvat p̄tate
&c. Susanne Hall alt ex &c. cū
verbit &c. petitur.

(Inv^t ex^y)

[illegible]

MR. WILLIAM SHAKESPEARES COMEDIES, & HISTORIES, & TRAGEDIES.

Published according to the True Originall Copies.



L O N D O N
Printed by Isaac Iaggard, and Ed. Blount. 1613

To the memory of my beloved, The AVTHOR

MR. WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE:

AND

what he hath left vs.

WHEN I have sung of Greece, or hanged of Rome
first forth, or since del from their after times,
Triumph, my Dictation, thus hath me to fling,
To write all scenes of Europe through one
He was not of my age, but for all times
And all the Muses still were in their prime,
when like Apollo he came forth to write
Our epos, or like a Mercury to charm;
And his life was the life of his times;
which were friendly span, and sweetly fit,
As those, he will vouchsafe no other life.
The merry Greekes, and Antiphanes,
Next Terence, and Plautus, were not playes
But unquaint, and dejected life
As they were not of Nations family,
Yet was I not gone Native all; Thy art,
My gentle Shakespeare, was every part,
For though the Poets nature, Nature be,
It is art that gives the fellow. And, that thy
style is to write a living line, may prove,
I shall as thou art, and strike the second line
From the Muses annals: turne the same,
(And justify with in) that he should be framed,
Or for the laurell, he may give a frame,
For as the Poets made, as well as before,
And such were then. Like him the fifters face
I was not in his life, nor for the time
Of Shakespeares mind, and time did time,
To his well turned, and true did time,
In each of which, he found to make a Line,
As himselfe, as the eyes of Government
Sweet Sinner of Nature, what a life it were
To see thee in our mothers yet again,
And make this flight upon the number of Thunes,
That should like Eliza, and our times:
But play, for thee on the Pictures place
Alas, I, and made a Confession there:
Shew forth the Sinner of Poets, and will rage,
Or vengeance, shall be shown the dropping stage;
which, from thy flight, first know, such inward of the night,
and depures day for thy vidence light.

BEN JONSON.

of



PLEASANT Conceited Comedie

CALLED,

Lowes labors lost.

As it was presented before her Highnes
this last Christmas.

Newly corrected and augmented
By W. Shakespeare.



Imprinted at London by W. W.
for Iulbert Barby.
1598.



TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE
Hennie Vriothelley, Earle of Southampton,
and Baron of Titchfield.

Ight Honourable, I know not how I shall offend in
dedicating my vnpolishd lines to your Lordship, nor
how the world will censure me for choosing so
strong a proppie to support so weak a burthen,
omeye if your Honour seeme but pleased, I ac-
count my selfe highly praised, and come to take advantage of all
idle hours, till I have bestowed you with some greater labour. But
if the first beere of my invention prove deformed, I shall be forie it
had so noble a god-father: and neuer after care to barren a land,
for feare it yeld me still so bad a harvest, I leaue it to your Honour-
able iorney and your Honor to your hearts content, which I wish
may aduocate answers your owne wish, and the worlds hope-
full expectation.

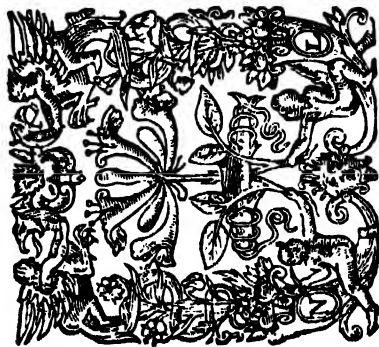
Your Honours in all dutie,

William Shakespeare

THE
Tragicall Historie of
HAMLET
Prince of Denmark

By William Shake-speare.

As it hath bene diuerſe times acted by his Highneſſe ſer-
uants in the Citie of London : as alſo in the two V-
niuerſities of Cambridge and Oxford, and elſe-where



At London printed for N.L. and Iohn Trundell
1603.



VENVS
AND ADONIS

*Vilia miretur vulgus: mihi flavus Apollo
Pocula Castalia plena ministret aqua.*



LONDON

Imprinted by Richard Field, and are to be sold at
the signe of the white Greyhound in
Paules Church-yard.

1593.

PRINTED BY ALLEN, SCOTT AND CO., 30, BOUVERIE STREET, E.C.
COMPOSED BY THE "THORNE" MACHINE.

